GUIDE TO THE RI3 ABKHAZ FILE

[The Abkhaz are located between the southwestern slopes of the Greater Caucasus Mountains and a narrow strip along the Black Sea coast in the extreme northwest of the Georgian SSR in the Soviet Union. Today this area is the Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic. The Abkhaz call themselves Apswa (Aphsua) and their region, Apsny (Aphsn). They have been part of the Georgian political territory since the Middle Ages. The most current figures (January 1, 1968) for the population of the republic are 477,000 in an area of 3,300 square miles. Abkhaz is a Northwestern Caucasian language closely related to Circassian and Ubykh. There are five major dialects, two of which have been reduced to writing. The Abkhaz have preserved their tribal organization, and in 1926 the republic was composed of 24 or 25 kin groups or communities. They have been only slightly affected by their literate Georgian neighbors. A group of approximately 13,000 (1926) Abkhaz live to the north across the Caucasus in the Cherkes region. They are known as Abaza and speak two of the five Abkhaz dialects as well as Circassian.

There are four sources in the Abkhaz file. Two are in English (3 and 4), one is a translation from the German (2), and one is from the Russian (1). 2: Byhan is the most general of the sources and would probably serve as the best introduction. It contains data on material culture, social organization, religion, and art, as well as comparable data on other Caucasian groups. 1: Dzhanashvili is largely concerned with Abkhaz religious beliefs, but it also contains some general ethnographic material. 3: Janashia also concerns Abkhaz religious beliefs as well as the ceremonies, and is based on materials collected in a southern village. 4: Janashia is a brief article discussing the

duality of the Abkhaz deity through an analysis of its name. It is based on material collected from the same village as in source no. 3.

This file provides a brief description of the traditional Abkhaz culture, with an emphasis on their religion. It does not contain data on its social, economic, or political position within the Soviet Union. Information on these areas may be found in the RI1 Georgia file (see especially source no. 5) and the R1 Soviet Union file (especially source no. 21). The file was processed between 1963 and 1967.]

113, 101, 197, 162

Abchas RI3

/For information on the identity, language, and geographical distribution of the Abchas, see 7: Columbia U. RH1 Caucasia, category 116, pp. 385, 429-430./

/iii/

/From the Editor/

104 In his compilatory article, "Abkhazia and the Abkhaz," which is placed in this sixteenth book of the Zapiski Otdiela, Mr. M. G. Dzhanashvili, in introducing Grusian and Askhaz words, has rendered them by means of the letters of the Russian alphabet, with the addition of two letters from the French alphabet (h and q) and one letter from the Grusian alphabet (ღ), in order to indicate the pronunciation of these words somewhat more accurately. The letter h is introduced by the author to indicate that the letter of the Russian alphabet with which it stands is to be pronounced with aspiration; the letter q is meant to indicate the deep-guttural k, and the Grusian letter ღ for the indication of a sound somewhat similar to a combination of the Russian letters t and ts /transliterated as ts'/. At the request of Mr. Dzhanashvili, who had neglected to explain this in his foreword, the editor is bringing this to the attention of the readers in order to prevent any misunderstanding which might arise during the reading of the article "Abkhazia and the Abkhaz." /Only the transliterated form of the native terms is given in the translation; where the author has used a special orthography for native terms, a note will refer the reader to the foreign text. The remainder of the editor's note has been omitted, since it is not pertinent to this article./

/1/ Abkhazia and the Abkhaz
(Ethnographic Sketch)

Foreword

101 The Abkhaz have been known since ancient times. Pliny (29-79 A. D.) calls them absilae; Arrian (100-160 A. D.) calls them apsilai (აფსილაι); the old Grusian chronicles refer to them as aphshili and aphsari. The Abkhaz call themselves aphsua and their country aphsn; the present-day Grusians give them various names: abkhazi, apkhazi, aphkhazi.

A 101 199

/1 cont./ From a comparison of these names it is evident that the ethnic name of the Abkhaz was formed from aps, abs, aphs, aphsh. In the languages of the Caucasus, the sounds b, p, ph, m, v, and also s and sh, frequently alternate. Here are some examples: a-m-seba = a-v-seba = ap-h-she-pha /sic/, meaning "to fill"; suli = shuri, "soul"; m-ravali = b-ravali = b-reli = ph-reli, "many"; p-rke = b-rke, etc. Thus the identity of abs, aps, aphs, and absh, aps /sic/, and aphsh is beyond doubt. What, then, does abs or aphsh mean?

A 193

First of all it must be said that in the Abkhaz language nouns are preceded by "a," corresponding to the meaning of the article le or la in the French language. In compounds this "a" is often dropped. Let us, by way of example, take

A G 192

identical words in the Grusian and Abkhaz languages:

Grusian	Abkhaz	
khalakhi	a-khalakh	town
nathla	a-nathra	baptism
kambechi	a-kambash	buffalo
nana	a-nan	mother
kharthueli	a-khirthua	Grusian
lazi	a-laz	Laz
kaba	a-kaba	dress
/2/.		
kaltha	a-kaltha	tails /of a coat/
kherkhi	a-khuarkhi	file
makrateli	a-makratil	scissors
kibe	a-kiba	stairs, ladder
gemo	a-gema	taste
khvabi	a-khvab	kettle
ugheli (Svan /Swan/: ughu)	a-ughu	yoke
guli (Svan:gui)	a-gu	heart
zari	a-zar	lament, sobbing

G 193

Frequently the Grusian language, too, has recourse to the method of forming nouns from verbal roots, with the addition at the end of the noun of the auxiliary verb li or ari (1)

1. ari = is; in the Grusian language and

G 193

/2 cont./ in its dialects this verb appears either in the form a (e.g., katsi-a = it is a man), or in the form li (ara-li = is not), or as ri or re (akhlo-re - it is near). Of these, the form ari is the most frequent in Grusian; re, ri, ro, in Mingrel; in Svan, li, ari; and in Abkhaz, l, r.

A G 197

(3rd person singular indicative, meaning "is"). For example, deg or dgi means "stand, stand firm"; a-deg or a-dgi = stand up; a-dgi-li = solid ground, earth, dry land. In the same way, nuskhe = count, m-nuskhe-li = counting, a-m-nuskhe-li = accountant.

A G 197

So the root consists merely of phs or phsh, which in many languages of the Caucasus, including Abkhaz and Grusian, has various related meanings: river, water, moisture, soul, spring, etc. For example, in Circassian, phdze or phse means "river, water"; in Grusian phsha means "river, brook, spring-water," phshe-na or phshi-nva = breathing, sigh, smell; m-phshueni- breathing, soul, spirit; phsa = to pour, phseli = urine; in Abkhaz, aphs = soul, aphsha = wind, air; adzi /see foreign text/ = water, river, brook; adzi-khi = well; adzi-zhi = lake; amshin = sea, etc.

A 101 174

It is well known that many ancient peoples got their names from the waters on whose banks they lived. We will recall, for instance, from ancient Slavic history, the Pomoryane, Polaby, Buzhane, and others (2).

2. "Settling in Europe, the Slavs gave to the rivers those most ancient names, brought over by them from the East, which originally were used as designations for river, or water in general. In this way the names Sava, Drava, Odra (Oder), Ra, Upa, Oka, Don, Dunai, Dvina, are of Aryan origin, and related forms and roots with the above-mentioned general meaning are found in

/2 cont./

101
194

Sanskrit; dhuni, dhūni (river) has retained its original meaning in the Caucasus, where among the Osset the forms dun and don refer to any river or body of water; among the Slavs, "Don" has become a proper name, and the form dun with the ending av has produced "Dunav," and then "Dunai." The word "Dunai," which serves as the proper name of the well-known river /the Danube/, is also still used as a name for all kinds of rivers, large and small. Examples can be found in Galician and Polish songs: "beyond the rivers -- beyond the dunai." (Afanas'ev, "Poeticheskiya vozzreniya slavyan na prirodu /Poetic views of the Slavs on nature/," II, 220).

/3/ We see the same thing in Georgia, too, where, in the majority of instances, the names of the provinces and of the tribes inhabiting them were formed from concepts meaning "river, spring, lake, water," etc. Thus, for instance, dcha means "spring, well, river"; dcha-ri = river; a-dchari= Adchara (in Turkish Georgia, Adzharia; dchari (river) = Dchar oblast (in Zakataly); dcha-ni means 'wells, rivers" -- dchan-ethi = Dchaneria (the Grusian name for all Turkish Georgia); dcharokhi = the river Dchorokh; dcha-la, "grove, river" -- dchala-didi = Dchaladidi (literally "large river").

Phsha = rivulet, Phsha-ethi = Pshaviia; Phsha = river near Gori, river in Guria, in Adzharia, and in other places; Abasha (the ancient Aphsha) = river in Imeretia; Phasisi (the ancient Phsisi) = the river Phaz, Phas (literally, "river"; phasisi is the genitive case).

From this same root comes a-phshi-li, exactly as a-dgi-li comes from dgi. Literally translated, a-phshi-li must mean "river." Thus I find the fullest resemblance between the

/3 cont./

101 174 names aphshili, phshaeli (Pshav), and Abasheli = Absheli (dweller on the banks of the river Abashi). The same meaning is also found in the word "Absari," in which, instead of the substantive verb ali, its other form ari appears (Abs-ari = Abs-ali); and since the Grusian ari, ali, and their abbreviated forms, ri, li, change to a and ua in Abkhaz (kharthu-ali = akhirthu-a = Grusian, guruli = a-gura-a = Gurian, me-gre-li = a-gru-a = Mingrel), we also have absua = Abkhaz, i.e., Grusian abshi-li (Abkhaz) = Abkhazian absu-a, with the same meaning.

From this same root are derived the names of many rivulets in Abkhazia, such as Phshitsa (a tributary of the Bzyb), Phshandra (near the village of Lykhny), the river Phstse, the river Khashu-Phse, the Phsbu, Tua-phse, etc.

/4/ The Circassians, of the same tribe as the Abkhaz and called adzikhi, adzigi, adzegi by the natives, got their name from the same root, dzi or dze, meaning "water, river, sea." As mentioned above, phse or phdze means "water, river" in Circassian; it has the same meaning in both Grusian and Abkhaz. Besides, in these latter languages from the same root were formed the words zghua or dzughva (Grusian, Mingrel and Svan) meaning "sea," adzizhi (Abkhaz) = lake, adzikhi (Abkhaz) = well, spring water. In this way, then the adzikhi (Circassians) came to be called by such a name. In exactly the same way, the word shapsugi from Grusian literally means "river-, living near the river" (sha-phsu-gi = sa-phsu-gi = sa-phshu-gi means in translation "where water -- there").

The most interesting of all is another word in Grusian, tba, meaning "lake." This word is found in the old literary monuments and today in the Mingrelian dialect and is pronounced the same way, toba; the Svan pronounce it tibar, sometimes tuibar, meaning "lake," as well as "deep ravine," and in general "deep hollow." In texts dated as early as the tenth century we find the name of the ancient Grusian province of Tbetha, in the center of which are the splendid ruins of the famous church of Tbetha, built by Ashot Kukh (died in 918). Tbetha means "lake region,

/4 cont./

●101 194 lakes"; Tbeli and tobeli (1) mean "little lake, lake-, located

1. "Tbeli" (pronounced "tobeli" in Mingrel) has been the title of the bishops of Tbetha since 918 A.D.

or living near a lake." And I can find no difference whatsoever between the Grusian Tobeli and the biblical Thobeli, which on Kipert's map occupy exactly the spot where the Grusian province of Tobetha (Tobeli) is located.

Greco-Roman authors sometimes refer to these Thobeli as Tibareni, and this name is also the Grusian Tobeli, or, in the Svan pronunciation, "Tibar." In the plural of this word we have "Tibareni," i.e., Tibarians = lake-dwellers. Hecataeus (ca. 550 B.C.) calls them Tipanisi (Tipanisse), which is a genitive plural and in Grusian means "those of the lakes." The Greco-Roman authors consider the Tipanisi, Tibareny, to be a people related to the Moskhi and the Kolkhi. From this same root we now have a multitude of /5/ names such as Tobarovani (rich in lakes), Lake Taparavan; Tobanieri (lake-), village in Imeretia (near Kutais); Toba-qure (lake-bay), village in Mingrelia; Didi-tba, great lake, near Tsarskie Kolodtsy; Tubanis-tba, lakish-lake, in the Akhalkalaki uyezd; Tqe-toba (forest-lake) in the Zakataly okrug, and others.

Reserving the right to return on some other occasion to a more detailed exposition of my views on the origin of the ethnic names of the Kartvelian people, I shall continue now with a brief historical sketch of Abkhazia.

195 The Grusian chronicles, the authenticity and ancientness of which were refuted by the late K.P.Patkanov, but which are fully substantiated anew by the discovered Grusian chronicle of the first half of the tenth century, testify that the propagator of Christianity in Abkhazia was Simon the Canaanite, who was in Georgia together with the apostle Andrew. Both apostles entered Adzharia, from where Andrew set out for Meskhetia (to Akhaltsikh),

[749] b) The Cherkess and Abkhaz

C 101 A 101 A 648 175 C 101 648 K 167 A 142

The Cherkess are called Kerketai, Kerketioi, Kerketaioi, Syndyi, Zygoi, Zinchoi by the Latin and Greek authors of antiquity; the Abkhaz are called the Apsil by Pliny (29 to 70 A.D.) and Arrian (100 to 160 A.D), Ap'šili and Ap'sari in Georgian chronicles: Abkhazia was dependent on Georgia during the first few centuries after Christ and afterwards on Lazia; in 786 it became an independent kingdom and was united again with Georgia by Bagrat III (980 to 1014) by marriage. Later it again achieved independence under the house of Shervashidze until the Russians occupied it, first the southern part, Samurzakhan, in 1845, and the rest of Abkhazia in 1863. The Cherkess are supposed to have occupied the northern foreland to a point beyond the Kuma, but later [750] [Fig. 441 appears here] to have been pushed back over the Terek, the Kuban, and the Malka rivers by the Tatars and, since 1777, by the Russians. As a result of the Tatar pressure the Cherkess tribes along the coast of the Black Sea had moved from there in the fourteenth century and pushed in among the Nogai, Karachi, and Taulu, in the Kabarda district, from which they derive their present name. After the suppression of the revolt in Dagestan and, in the autumn of 1864, the decisive defeat of the Cherkess, who had been offering stubborn resistance for decades, most of them, over 400,000, emigrated together with many Abkhaz, including the entire Ubykh tribe, to Asia Minor, Syria, and the Balkan peninsula.

[751] The Abkhaz (see Fig. 441) are physically of medium height, powerful build, and wiry. The skull

A 181 [751 cont.] Abkhaz are similarly endowed, but are distinguished from the former by greater irritability, instability, garrulity, politeness, and, like the Mingrel, are notorious thieves. [Fig. 442 appears here.]

A 101 [621] [619] The Abkhaz now consist of 24 or 25 kin groups or communities; as tribes, the following have been mentioned earlier: the Ubykh between Khamise and Shakhe, the Abadzekh between Pshekups and Byelaya, the Dzhigeth between Shakhe and Mzymta; farther south up to the Bzyb, the Bzubb, up to the Kodor, the true Abkhaz, and in their hinterland the Tsebeldin; up to the Galisga, the Abshav and, bordering on Mingrelia, the Samurzakhan.

A 99 177 [302] Dress. The Abkhaz women wear Cherkess, or nowadays usually European, clothing (see Fig. 443), the men the Cherkess coat (see Fig. 441); they usually shave the head bare.

C 291 A [177] The Cherkess attire for men has spread widely among the Cossacks and [752] [Fig. 443 appears here] through all of Caucasia as far as the lowland Georgians in the south, and the women's attire has been adopted by the neighboring Abkhaz, Karachai, and Osset. The men's costume (see Fig. 442) consists of a short (yana) of white linen or red taffeta, baggy pants, a silk embroidered undergarment with a collar, a long robe (tsié) open at the chest, made of black or gray cloth, with cartridge pockets (khazyr) on the breast, narrow belt strap, leather leggings, sandals of leather or linden bark, cap (papakh) of white or black sheepskin (see Fig. 444), and in addition, for bad weather, a black coat (tsauka, burka) of goat and sheep wool, with a hood (g'etapt) that is draped around in such a manner that the right arm remains free. They cut their hair off short, leaving only a braided tuft (haidar). Out-of-doors they carry a dagger (kama, see Fig. 449) on the belt, and from a sword-belt they hang a saber, the blade of which is often Damascus, Khorassan, Hungarian, or Lezgin work and which is often inlayed with silver or gold on a black background, as are also the studs of the horse's harness and other parts of the armament. This further consists of: pistol (see Fig. 450), flintlock rifle with

C 302 C 411 C [439] [495]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *antswa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1928, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

himself, by placing before the "icon" also the amount he was to pay to the opponent.

Muhammadans also take the propitiatory oath at Ilori, together with the Christians.[1]

There are many stories current about the power of the Ilori "icon" to work miracles. I learned one of them from the lips of Biram Tkhazou and Seyt Zhania.

"In ancient times the Ilori 'icon' determined all the disputes of human mortals in the following manner. High up in the centre of the church, hung the golden scales of Justice. Under these scales stood the suitors, praying zealously to the Ilori 'icon', who inclined the scale over the head of the righteous. Knowing this, Abkhasians would not venture to break the law or wrong one another; peace and happiness reigned upon the earth. But men are cunning; an impious Abkhaz decided to deceive the great Ilori 'icon'. He owed a neighbour of his a hundred *manat'i* (= rubles) which he would not pay. The creditor complained. They both went to Ilori. When they appeared before the 'icon', the debtor handed to his creditor his staff which contained the hundred *manat'i*. The scale inclined towards the creditor, thus acquitting him of the charge. He took back his staff and left the church. The Ilori 'icon' was 'offended' and because of this fraudulence on the part of one Abkhaz it punished the entire people: the 'icon' took the scales of Justice to heaven for ever."

In ancient times the Ilori "icon" provided oxen for itself on the eve of the wake festival. The Commission assured me that eye-witnesses of this miracle were still living in Abkhasia, but none knew their names. As this providing of the oxen is described by A. Lamberti in the manner in which the Abkhasians relate it to-day, I will quote the description from his work.[2]

"On November 20th[3] they celebrate St. George's Day. A superstition prevails among the people that this celebrated martyr, on this day, procures for himself an ox from the neighbourhood and brings it by night into the Ilori Church dedicated to him. This church is held in great esteem, not only by all the Megrels, but by the neighbouring peoples also. Therefore it is very rich in gold and silver[4]—the icons are all made of these metals and are adorned, too, with precious stones; and even the doors are mounted in thick sheets of silver. So revered is this church by all the people, that, although situated

[1] In Northern Abkhasia *Dadwsp'sh* is endowed with a similar power.

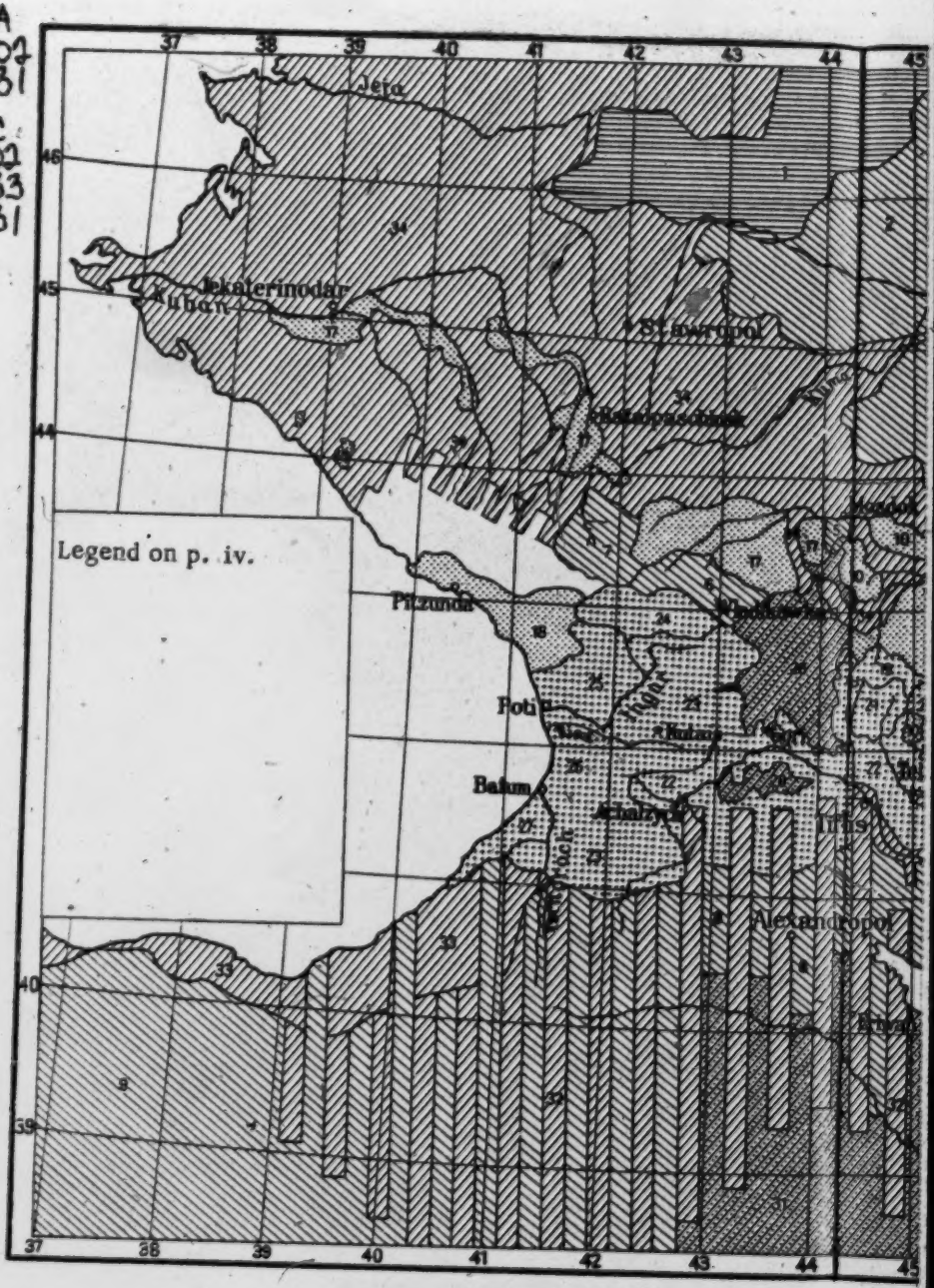
[2] A. Lamberti lived as a missionary for eighteen years in Megrelia (1635–1653), and, according to him (and also to other sources), the present-day southern Abkhasia (Abzhua) constituted then part of Megrelia, the northern boundary being the River Kodor.

[3] The 10th of our (old) style.—N. J.

[4] At the present time, too, it is the wealthiest and the most influential of all the churches of Abkhasia.—N. J.

2: Byhan--ii E-4 (no date) 1926 RI13 Abkhaz RI13
Caucasia RH1

A
●107
131
C
107
133
131

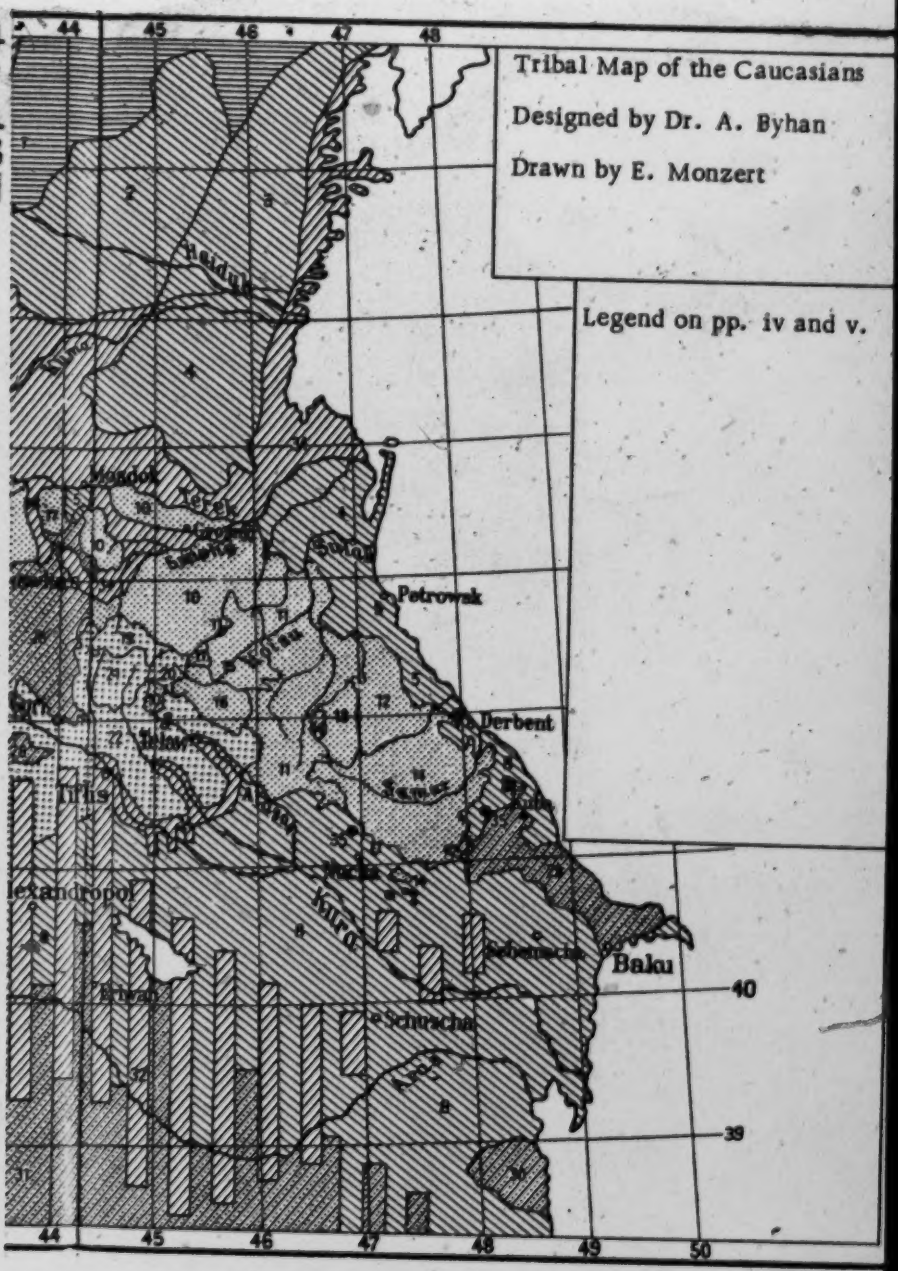


[p. 749 (A)]

2: Byhan--iii E-4 (no date) 1926

RI13 Abkhaz RI13
Caucasia RH1

A
107
131
C
102
133
131



A
102
131
C
102
133
131

MONGOL:

1 Kalmyk

TURKS:

2 Turkmen /Turcoman/
3 Kirgis /Kirgiz/
4 Nogai
5 Kymyk /Kumyk/
6 Taulu
7 Karatschai /Karachai/
8 Aserbaidshan Tatar /Azerbaijani Tatar/
9 Osman

CAUCASIANS:

10 Tschetschen /Chechen/
LESGHIER: /Lezgin/
11 Awar /Avar/
12 Dargin
13 Lak /Lek/
14 Kürin /Kurin/
15 Andi
16 Dido /Didol/

---

17 Tscherkess /Cherkess/
18 Abchas /Abkhaz/

KHARTHWELIER /Karthvelians/

19 Chewsur /Khevsur/
20 Thusch /Tush/
21 Pschaw /Pshav/
22 Georgier /Grusians/
23 Jmerier /Imeretin/
24 Swan
25 Mingrel
26 Gurier /Gurian/
27 Las /Laz/

A
102
131
C
102
133
131

INDO-EUROPEAN:

IRANIER /IRANIANS/:

28 Ossen /Osset/
29 Tat
30 Talysch /Talysh/
31 Kurd

32 Armenians
33 Greeks
34 Russians

SEMITES:

35 Mountain Jews

/iii/

/From the Editor/

104 In his compilatory article, "Abkhazia and the Abkhaz," which is placed in this, sixteenth book of the Zapiski Otdiela, Mr. M. G. Dzhanashvili, in introducing Grusian and Askhaz words, has rendered them by means of the letters of the Russian alphabet, with the addition of two letters from the French alphabet (h and q) and one letter from the Grusian alphabet (ღ), in order to indicate the pronunciation of these words somewhat more accurately. The letter h is introduced by the author to indicate that the letter of the Russian alphabet, with which it stands is to be pronounced with aspiration; the letter q is meant to indicate the deep- guttural k, and the Grusian letter ღ for the indication of a sound somewhat similar to a combination of the Russian letters t and ts /transliterated as ts'/. At the request of Mr. Dzhanashvili, who had neglected to explain this in his foreword, the editor is bringing this to the attention of the readers in order to prevent any misunderstanding which might arise during the reading of the article "Abkhazia and the Abkhaz." /Only the transliterated form of the native terms is given in the translation; where the author has used a special orthography for native terms, a note will refer the reader to the foreign text. The remainder of the editor's note has been omitted, since it is not pertinent to this article./

/1/ Abkhazia and the Abkhaz
(Ethnographic Sketch)

Foreword

101 The Abkhaz have been known since ancient times. Pliny (29-79 A. D.) calls them absilae; Arrian (100-160 A. D.) calls them apsilai (აფსილაι); the old Grusian chronicles refer to them as aphshili and aphsari. The Abkhaz call themselves aphsua and their country aphsn; the present-day Grusians give them various names: abkhazi, apkhazi, aphkhazi.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *dntswa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1928, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibzha

'mothers' and 'God', are often pronounced in the same manner."[1] 776
"During the study of the different religious beliefs and customs of [192]
the Abkhasians," he continues, "we came across the following phrase among others: *antswà* r-*məzəzə*—'the cause, guilt of God' (properly, 'the guilt or fault of gods,' N. Janashia). The roman r is the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural. . . . The above quoted construction—*antswà r-məzəzə*—could not have been arrived at unless the word *antswà* was used in the plural," justly remarks the author; "were it in the singular, we would have had *antswà i-məzəzə*."

Abkhasians regard the elements and manifestations of nature as rational beings. Each of these rational beings has his own gods, whom the orthodox Abkhasian serves honestly, in the light of his understanding. If the name of one, or more, of these gods has been forgotten by the people, he, the god, is simply called *inkhwə̀**—"his 'part', 'share' of mother," or they use the full form *intswakhwə̀*—"his part of God," while under the influence of Christianity—*inəkhakhwə̀*, in which *akhwə̀* denotes "part, share, dole" and *anə̀kha*—"icon."[2]

In Abkhasian conception, God is One, but He is of infinitely numerous "doles" or parts. Not only each manifestation of nature, but also each tribe, family, or individual, has his own part of God, just as each Christian has his guardian-angel. The Abkhaz says *səntswakhwə̀*—"my (*s-* is the pronominal characteristic of the first [193]
person singular) part of God"; *untswakhwə̀*—"thy (*u-* is the pronominal characteristic of the second person singular) part of God." And it should be noted that one may offend against not only one's own "part of God", but also against "the part of God" of one's neighbour, or relation, etc. . . .

This conception of the Deity as a multiform being appears to account for the fact that the word *antswà* is in the plural. Here I will [191]
note that such a conception evidently did not prevail among the Abkhasians only; its traces remain to this day even among the

[1] P. Dcharaia, *On the Relation of the Abkhasian lang. to the Japhetic* (in Russian) 104
in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics*, St. Pb., 1912, vol. iv, p. 65.

* The combination "*khw*" represents a sound uttered with one breath impulse. The underlined "*kh*" ("*kh*") constitutes actually a trigraph in which the digraph "*kh*" represents a guttural fricative equivalent to German *ach-laut*, and the *linea subscript* a hard diffusive glottal spirant, which is not to be identified with the palatal (front) "*h*", and which is represented elsewhere, independently, as "*h̀*"; the combination "*kh*" (= *kh* + *h̀*) is thus a deeper guttural, glottal, sound than the German *ach-laut*. The labial semi-vowel "*w*" represents the labialization of the preceding "*kh*". "*Khw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*kh*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet*, pp. 48 and 39; see also his *Abkhasian-Russian Dictionary*, Leningrad, 1926, pp. xxxv–xxxvi. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[2] I. Javakhishvili derives *anə̀kha* from the Georgian word *khati*, icon. May not *khati* be derived from the Abkhasian verb *akhat'ara*? *A-khə̀*, head, *at'ara*, to give, to set, to level the head. Or is it a mere consonance?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Ad2Vi62h9

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. Àyt'ar-nɔ̀hwa*

1. *Jabrán*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nɔ̀hwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nɔ̀hwa*, which is derived from *a-nɔ̀hwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nɔ̀hwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabrán*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashɔ̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[1] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswɔ̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswɔ̀sa*, a combination of *adswɔ̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *àrsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*aṗ'hwɔs-tsk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "h" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "hw" represents a labialized variety of "h". [Translator's Note.]

† The combination "dsw" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "ds". For this latter sound see p. 329 (ṡ). [Translator's Note.]

[1] N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskoe Chtenie*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.
(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[1] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashɔ̀* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

Georgians. Thus, according to Iv. Gv. Gomelauri, the well-known pedagogue, in K'iziqi (Signakh district, in Kakhet'i) they say: *tchemi dsili ghmert'i; zheni dsili ghmert'i*, "my part of God," "thy part of God." A. Dsuladze, who is well acquainted with the life of the Gurian people, told me that similar expressions were also used in Guria.

Further, as the reader will see for himself, the word *an*, "mother" constitutes part of the names of a series of gods, and several of these names are of the feminine gender, as Dcharaia has also justly noticed. In this connection I should like to direct the attention of the reader to the names of two gods, namely, *jabrdn* and *zhwabrdn*.* Each of these words has in our opinion several connotations; *jabrdn* is compounded of several words: *j* is the root from the word *a-j-ma*, a goat; *a-b*, father; *r* the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural; and *an*, mother. Thus *jabrdn* denotes "father and mother of goats", i.e. "(fore)parents of goats", or "god of goats". In the same manner *zhwabrdn* is compounded of *a-zhw*, a cow, and of the components just explained, so that the whole denotes "father and mother of cows", i.e. "(fore)parents of cows".[1] It seems to me that at the dawning of their religio-philosophical life, the Abkhasians evidently worshipped equally both their male and female ancestors. How strong is this ancestor-worship among the Abkhasians even to-day will be shown in my work *The Ancestor Cult*.

Thus, as is the case of Dcharaia, I think that the word *antswd* is derived from the word *an* in the plural. I also think that the name *antswd*, of the Supreme Being, arose from the deification of ancestors. At first it was evidently used with the plural termination, and in the feminine gender, and later, in the course of time, from "many mothers-gods" arose the One God *antswd*.[2] The changing of the gender of gods is often observed in the religions of the primitive peoples, and *antswd* therefore constitutes no exception.[3]

Antswd is One, but He is plural as to His parts. All the gods, of which we will speak below, are subject to and obey Him as the Supreme Being. In the tales, I was told, it is said that *antswd's* mother came from a Megrelian princely *gvari* of Mkheidze, the Abkhasian form of

* The combination *zhw* is to be uttered with one breath impulse; it represents a labialised variety of "*zh*" (= French "*j*"). Cf. "*tsw*", p. 118, n. *. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Such a morphological interpretation does not appear admissible, as the word *an*, if in this case it denotes "mother", is never combined with *ab*, father, but governs the first part of the compound word, *jab* and *zhab*, which, judging from the relative infix *r*, is assumed to be plural. [Note by the Editor, *Khr. V.*]

[2] And not *antswa*, as it should have sounded and does really sound "mothers". See above, pp. 118–19. [Ed., *Khris. Vos.*]

[3] If this supposition turns out to be justified, and the word *antswd* is not of Sumero-Babylono-Assyrian origin (from *An*, *Ass*), its significance as a term employed in the history of religious beliefs generally will be greatly increased.

796 When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a
[262] pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great
[539] god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwədù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *àämen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short
[197] on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megre-
[776] lianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours
[621] are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread
[352] is baked in rhododendron (*à-k'wazhwe*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

[776] This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

104 * The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*k'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*ky*", "*wy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotizes the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*k'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*k'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

[1] In Abkhasian *àtshyazhwe*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *ant'ari*) *tsk'ebse*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsk'ya*), good (*à-bea*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *bosloba* (an abstract form of *bosoli*, cowhouse) or *iloroba*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ilori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is
[171] known as *Zhini-Ant'ar*.

3:Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AàzVlbzha

The Megrelians also know this septenary, *shk'vit'-ul-i*, in honour of which the majority of families let loose a cow with a pierced ear. Her milk is not used for food. The bullock is offered in sacrifice, while the heifer is reared. The well-known Pshav *Kviria* is, perhaps, related to Megrelian Àyt'ar. I have pointed out above that among the Megrelians the god of cattle-breeding is called *Zhini Ant'ar*. *Ant'ar* is the Abkhasian *Àyt'ar*, while *zhini*, in Megrelian, "high," "heavenly," is equivalent to Abkhasian *khikh*. The Abkhasians, however, appear to have split up *Zhini Ant'ar* into two gods, *Àyt'ar* and *Khikh*. They appeal for help to the latter in the spring, when the cattle are taken to the mountain pastures. They pray to him under the shadows of trees. On four pillarets are placed poles, which are covered with leaves of trees, particularly of the wild hazel tree, the oak, or yoke-elm. A cheese curd wrapped in chestnut tree bark is placed on this table (*ashwamkyàt'*)* which is covered with greenery; on it is also placed *àtchamak'wa*, a kind of millet porridge, cooked with cheese. In front of it is also placed milk gruel. Women are not allowed to be present. The head of the family, standing with uncovered head in front of this green table, called *ashwamkyàt'*, prays that *Khikh*, the great part of the great deity Àyt'ar, may increase his cattle and send all good things. While praying he spills a little of the gruel towards the sea and towards the mountains, uttering *wootsw*. The prayer over, he takes the cheese curd and passes over it cross-wise a hazel "knife", which is really a stick cut into a tapering, knife-like shape, after which he actually cuts the cheese curd with a real knife.[1] This ceremony of prayer is followed by a dinner, the remains of which are not cleared away. Three of the supports or legs of *ashwamkyàt'* are cut off (each with one stroke), the fourth remains there untouched. It seems to me probable that the table itself received its name from this act of cutting. Megrelians also know this *ashwamkyàt'*, which they call *sumket* (*sumi keti*), "three sticks," derived, perhaps, from *sumkvat'*, in which case it would denote "three cuttings" (*kvat'* < *kvat'ua* = to cut, to fell), i.e. "cut with three strokes."[2]

The Georgian Mountaineers also have their *Anaior-i*.

(c) *Alòshkintr* (*alòskintr*).

These cakes are also put aside. The prayer now takes three new

* The combination *shw* represents a labialized variety of "*sh*"; cf. "*shw*", p. 120, note *. In *ashwamkyat'* the "*sh*" is not only labialized, but also lingualized or lotized, which lingualization is not, however, represented in the transcription. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] By using the wooden knife, the Abkhasian probably pays tribute to that very ancient time when his ancestors used that kind of knife.

[2] If the first part *shwum* represents the Megrelian word "three", one should keep in mind not the "K'art'lianized" form *sumi*, but the original, Tubal-Kainian *shumi*; see Marr, *From the Journeys to Svania* (in Russian), in *Khrist. Vostok*, ii, pp. 17–18. (Editor, *Khrist. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVihZhq

1796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alèshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[929] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[958] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[916] In the opinion of the commission, *Alèshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[23] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight." [1]

The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If
[807] someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri, vàri, khazò, jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*wàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khazò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

1796 (*d*) *Amza-nokwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
1796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

* See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the pro/nuction of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttaral " ɜ " (the ancient Arabic *'ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[104] [1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Ara* (cf. *Alèshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Arwis*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.
[171]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Alzvibzha

1. *Adzɔrgə-khwasha*

Either during the night before *basioba*, or, according to some members of the Commission, on the Wednesday evening of Passion-week, is observed the rite of binding legs with wool threads. Having supped early, the family retires to bed, each individual thrusting out his or her right leg from under the blanket. The eldest woman in the family stands on a stool in the middle of the room, and spins thread from wool. She does her work in silence. Having spun the required quantity, she quietly approaches the beds, and binds with this thread the right leg of each of their occupants, murmuring: "May God grant thee to see such days for a hundred years!" *Adzɔrga* (more correctly, *adzɔga*) denotes a thick thread; *a-khwasha*—Friday, so that this rite was in former days, probably, observed on Fridays. The threads were afterwards burnt on the fire under the small cauldron in which was boiled the meat of the sacrificial animal, on Easter Day.

2. *K'wab-gharghar*[*]

As soon as the binding ceremony was finished, the woman seized a copper cauldron, or a copper basin, and struck it like a gong, shouting at the top of her voice: "We have beaten! We have beaten!" The whole family then ran out into the garden, shouting *shwahk'wat'weyt!* "We have beaten you (outstripped)!" The "beaten" neighbours, annoyed to find themselves "beaten", immediately fell upon them, and a mock battle ensued. The battle was fought, of course, entirely as a joke, and with great merriment. In ancient times, a whole village often went to "battle" against another, beating copper cauldrons and basins. The "battle" was followed by dances and fun-making continuing till the dawn. *A-k'wab* denotes cauldron of copper, *gharghar*, knock, rap, clatter of a copper cauldron or basin.

3. *Aqat'wava*

This Abkhasian term denotes the following superstition: an Abkhaz considers it a great misfortune if he hears the warbling or chirping of a swallow or the call of a cuckoo, before he has had his breakfast (or has at any rate partaken of salt); the bird will have "beaten" him, and this he regards as a great misfortune. In order to avoid this he eats salt, or something salt-flavoured immediately on rising from bed, which means that he has won the "contest".[1]

[*] The labial semi-vowel "*w*" in "*k'w*", "*t'w*", as also in "*hw*", "*tw*", etc., met with in this article, labializes the preceding consonant sound, the combination "*k'w*", "*hw*", etc., representing labialized varieties of "*k'*", "*h*", etc. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Georgians also have such a superstition.

1: Dzhanashvili, M.G. Abkhaziya i abkhaztsy /Abkhazia and the Abkhaz/. Zapiski Kavkazskago Otdfela Imperatorskago Russkago Geograficheskago Obshchestva /Memoirs of the Caucasus Section of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society/, Book 16, pp. 1-59. Tiflis, 1894.

Harvard: P Slav 623.310 [HRAF MS: pp. 1-69]

Translated from the Russian for the Human Relations Area Files by Aza Tugan and Elma Kasbek.

[Approximately half of this source is concerned with the religious beliefs of the Abkhaz; in particular, their deities, the prayers and ceremonies honoring them, causes of illness and magical therapy, souls of the dead and fate. The remainder presents general ethnographic information about social life (marriage, the fosterage system of the upper class, etc.) and some notes on mortuary practices.]

Field date: no date
Analyst: Joan Steffens

Evaluation: Linguist-4
Processed in 1964-1967

2: Byhan, Arthur. Kaukasien, Ost- und Nordrussland, Finnland: I. Die kaukasischen Völker [Caucasians, East and North Russia, Finland: I. The Caucasian Peoples]. Illustrierte Völkerkunde, edited by Georg Buschan, Vol. 2, part 2, pp. 749-844. Stuttgart: Strecker und Schröder, 1926.

74 text figures; 1 map.

Yale: Nkb18. 910bb. v. 2/2 [HRAF Ms: pp. v., 1-122]

Translated from the German for the Human Relations Area Files by Robert B. Lees.

/This source presents information on the clothing, dwellings, economy, social organization, marriage customs, burial practices, religious beliefs and ceremonies, law and art of the Abkhaz.

Comparable material has been given for other groups and has been marked for the appropriate file: Cherkess (RH5); Chechen (RI5); Lezgin (RH8); Osset (RH9); Mountain Jews (RK5); Karachai, Taulu, and Kumyk (RH7); and Caucasia (RH1). --Analyst/

Field date: no date
Analyst: Joan Steffens

Evaluation: Ethnologist - 4
Processed in 1963

3: Janashia, N.S. The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians. Georgica, Vol. 1, Nos. 4 and 5, pp. 117-153. Hertford, England: The Georgian Historical Society, 1937.

Yale: Bw51g. 12. 1

[This article represents a revision in 1914 of materials collected ca. 1900 in the village of Adzvibzha in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua). The author describes the gods of the Abkhaz and the religious ceremonies connected with them. The discussion follows the established order of church festivals, centering around the four chief holidays of the year (the New Year, Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas).

This is a translation of the article published in Khristianski Vostok, The Christian East, Petrograd, 1915, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 72-112. -- Analyst]

Field date: ca. 1900
Analyst: Joan Steffens

Evaluation: Indigene-5
Processed in 1963

4: Janashia, Simon. The Abkhasian Name of the Supreme Being. Georgica, Vol. 1, Nos. 4 and 5, pp. 287-289. Hertford, England: The Georgian Historical Society, 1937.

Yale: Bw51g. 12. 1

[The author discusses the question of the plurality of the chief deity of the Abkhaz through an analysis of its name - antswà. The material was collected in the village of Adzvibzha (in Abzhua, the Kodor district).

This is a translation of the article published in Georgian in Dselidsdeuli - The Year Book, of the Georgian Philological Society, Tiflis, 1923-1924, vol. i-ii, pp. 69-73. -- Analyst]

Field date: 1921
Analyst: Joan Steffens

Evaluation: Indigene-5
Processed in 1963

● 113, 642 Abkhaz RI 3

[For the constitutional provisions for the higher organs of state power and for the organs of state administration in the Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, see the Georgian Constitution of 1947, 5: American Russian Institute, RI 1 Georgia, category 116, pp. 10-12.]

113, 642 Abkhaz RI3

[For a brief discussion of the territorial and political status of the Abkhaz Autonomous Republic, see 21: Kolarz, Rl Soviet Union, category 116, pp. 236-237. Bibliographic notes appear on pp. 253-254.]

113; 631 Abkhaz RI 3

/For a list of territorial units of the Abchas A. S. S. R., see 7:Columbia U. RH 1 Caucasia, cat. 116, p. 642./

113, 101, 197, 162 Abkhaz RI3

/For information on the identity, language, and geographical distribution of the Abchas, see 7: Columbia U. RH1 Caucasia, category 116, pp. 385, 429-430./

/49 cont./

755 ram or a lamb, together with loaves of bread, etc. All
782 this is taken to the place selected, and the patient himself
[562] is led there. No women are present, for they are not allowed to approach this sacred place. A venerable man, holding a candle, declares, "Great god, as is proper and as the fortune-teller has prescribed, the worshiper today stands before you; he has brought sacrificial animals and loaves of bread ... Have mercy upon him, be merciful to him, if he has sinned before you, forgive him. I beg you to let him go from this day forward, to leave him and free him like a loosened knot." While saying these words, the venerable man moves the candle around the patient, lights it, and places it nearby. He then /50/ takes another candle
[776] and prays to Michael-Gabriel. Upon the completion of this ceremony, the sick person returns home alone, while the others sit down to a meal.

One such ceremony, however, is not considered sufficient for the send-off of so eminent a guest as a god. The
[796] Abkhaz is therefore obliged to repeat the ceremony annually. One day a week is set aside as a holiday in honor of that same supreme being; this day is considered such a sacred one that the house even remains unswept, etc.

19.

Aphi

776 [821] Aphi (2) is the god and master of the thunder, lightning,

● [113] 2. See Sborn. sveden. o kavk. gortsakh, No. V, Tiflis, 1871, pp. 15-16, article "Religioznyye verovaniye abkhaztsev /Religious beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A. -- where, by the way, this deity is called Afy.

[782] and all atmospheric phenomena in general. The most solemn prayers in Abkhazia are offered in honor of this god.

/52 cont./

821 766 "Recently," writes Mr. Giorgidze in the newspaper Iveriia of 1888, "a man was being buried with laments and sobbing. At that moment two bulls grazing nearby were struck by a thunderbolt and immediately the crying and sobbing turned into dancing and singing, "Atlarchouph." The dead bulls were lifted up and placed on a tree, and the deceased was buried in a deathly silence."

The corpse of a person struck by a thunderbolt is placed in a coffin, put on a tower, and left there until nothing but his bones remain; the coffin is then taken down and buried with the normal burial ceremonies and the celebration of the funeral-banquet established by custom.

175 764 [766] [821] It was probably this custom of such placing or suspending of the corpses of those killed by Aphi that led the ancient Greco-Roman writers and the geographer Vakhushti to state that in Abkhazia and Colchis dead men were not buried, but their corpses hung in trees. These are Vakhushti's words: "Though Christians by creed, the Abkhaz do not know their religion and are therefore considered to be idolaters. And indeed, instead of burying their dead, they dress them in their best clothes and weapons, lock them in boxes, and place them in trees." Apollonius Rhodius (250-200 B.C.) wrote of Colchis, "Many grapes and willows grew there, from the tops of which corpses of the dead were suspended by chains. Even now the inhabitants of Colchis consider it a crime to burn corpses of men or even to bury them and cover them with burial mounds; they are put in undressed hides of bulls and suspended from trees far from the city. But the earth as well as the air gets its own, for the corpses of women are buried in it; such is their law" (1). The same thing is

[113]

1. Greko-Rimskiie pisateli o kavkaze /Greco-Roman authors on the Caucasus/, by Chr, pt. 49.

attested in Variae Historiae: "The Colchi put their dead in hides, sew them up and hang them on trees" (2). Nymphodorus

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Notes and Considerations concerning Chapter II

[196] It is of great interest to determine which pagan cult approximates, under the name of *Àmshap'*, to Easter, the day of the Resurrection of Christ. I. Javakhishvili states in his well-known *History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian) that, according to Dubrovin, the Abkhasians called *Àmshap'* also *Mirilkhu*. In my opinion this is another form of the Abkhasian word *mɜzəkhwə̀*, i.e. " part of the moon," derived from *ámɜza*, moon, and *a-khwə̀*, dole, part, share. If this supposition is correct, *mɜzəkhwə̀* would denote " to give to the moon its share, part ", i.e. " praying to the moon." [1] It should be noted, however, that neither the members of the Commission nor anyone whom I questioned knew anything about this name of *Àmshap'*. It is to be assumed that this name was noted down from the lips of the Mountaineers among whom it had evidently been preserved. In further support of the possible close connection between *Àmshap'* [196] and the moon cult (and the " tree spirit ") there is also the fact that the most important role in these festivals is assigned to St. George of Ilori, to which saint, as Javakhishvili has proved in his aforementioned work, is assimilated the moon cult. The procuring by this saint of a bullock, its " purification " by leading it three times from the mountains to the sea and back, the dedication to him of the cow *adzàtwə̀*, and, finally, the Gurian name of *zhwabràn*, *Iloroba*, prove that St. George is closely connected with the Abkhasian pleiade. Here is yet another curious fact. In the village of Bandza there is a church dedicated to St. George and called Shourkari. There still exists here the following custom: On the Monday [2] following Low Sunday, after the domestic offering, the populace repair to the church, and on their way, singing *Kyrie eleison*, they uproot a tree without the use of any implement, carry it three times around the wall enclosing the church, and offer it to St. George. The tree is then left within the church enclosure until the next year when it is replaced by a fresh one. This, in my opinion, symbolizes the victory of St. George over the moon (= *t'ut'a* in Megrelian, and over the " tree ").[3] Such a custom also [191] prevails in the village Opshkvit'i, in Lower Imeret'i, where on the 23rd April the populace offers, in the same manner as at Bandza, a tree to St. George.[4]

196 Judging from the description of *The Supplication of the Leybaa*, 191 by the priest N. Pateyna, which has been preserved in its purest state,

[113] [1] Cf. N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, p. 133 (or its translation in this Journal, pp. 178–6.)

[2] " Monday " in Megrelian is *t'ut'ashkhi*, that is, the day of the moon (I. Kipshidze, op. cit., s.v. *dghe*). Noteworthy is Lamberti's description of the fear of the moon by the Megrelians.

[3] According to the information given me by Sh. P'aghava and El. Ot'khmeouri.

[4] *O-pshkvit'-i*, judging from its form, is of Megrelian origin.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

ox of a certain colour. If the miracles you talk so much about are true, it should be an easy matter for St. George to bring my ox into this church to-night; then, certainly, I will gladly embrace your Faith.' The condition was accepted. On the following morning, early, on opening the gates, there was found within the enclosure an ox which the unbeliever recognized as his own. Thus he was convinced of his error, and embraced the Christian Faith."[1]

(c) *Indl-qwùba.*

The *T'avadi*-s Marshania, and all those Abkhasians who descended from the mountains (Dsabalaa, Dalaa, Pskhvu, etc.), offer sacrifices (a ram, without fail) in exactly the same manner to a sanctity, *Indl-qwùba*, instead of to the Ilori "icon". I could obtain no information of any kind about this "icon". Everybody I questioned gave the same answer: *Indl-qwùba* is equal in power to *Dodèrop'sh* and the Ilori "icon".

These offerings are performed early in the morning, and serve as breakfasts. Every Abkhaz slaughters some animal for the meal (the favourite one is a castrated goat), it is often prepared on the Saturday. They also pay the customary Paschal visits. After the midday sacrificial meal they all go to the public square, where they indulge in games, chiefly football. During Easter week they also organize horse racing, the most popular sport of the Abkhasians.

7. *The Second Day of Easter*

This is a commemoration day. A variety of dishes are prepared, all of which are placed on a table by an open window. The eldest of the family, holding a candle and a glass of wine in his hands, prays to the souls of deceased relatives that they grant his family peace and happiness. Then follows the pouring of wine on the meat and wheat dishes. The whole family stand behind the supplicant. After the prayer each member approaches, places a piece of frankincense on burning embers, and pours wine on the food. Here stands too a smoking pipe. All remain seated in silence, in order that the souls of the deceased ancestors may eat in peace.[2]

The Abkhasian, as has already been stated, have no Paschal greeting such as "Christ is risen". They welcome each other with a kiss, saying: "May God grant us that we meet again next year," to which the other replies: "And for a hundred years."

[1] Quoted from the Russian and Georgian translation of A. Lamberti's *Relatione della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia nella quale si tratta dell'Origine, costumi e Costi naturali di quei Paesi.* Published in Naples, 1654.

[2] This rite will be described in detail in my work *The Cult of the Ancestors.*

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE ABKHASIAN NAME OF THE SUPREME BEING

By Simon Janashia

Atranslation of the article published in Georgian in *Dselidsdeuli*—The Year Book, of the Georgian Philological Society, Tiflis, 1923–4, vol. i–ii, pp. 69–73.]

IT was Uslar who first observed that the Abkhasian name of the Supreme Being was in the plural.[1] He even quotes an example, i.e. *antswà dəuk'wa*,* the great God, lit. (*les*) *dieux grands*, in which the appearance of the adjective in the plural definitely testifies that, in the conception of the speaker, the ancient religious ideas—according to which God was not of one, but of many parts—were still in existence. The author remarks " only heathen Abkhasians say this ", the Chirstian and Muhammadan Abkhasians conceiving God quite definitely as the One, absolute Being.

Such an assertion was, perhaps, an excusable mistake on the part of the distinguished linguist, who was an orthodox Christian. It is impossible to divide the Abkhasians into such groups on the basis of their religious beliefs, despite the fact that formally they belong either to the Christian Church or to Islam. The example quoted by Uslar is probably one of those fortuitous discoveries whereby there suddenly emerges from the routine of ordinary usage a product of the national-spiritual creativeness belonging to the depths of the remote past.

Later, the same opinion (about the plural form) was put forward by Dcharaia[2] and Janashia.[3] The latter, however, thought that the word in question may have originated from the same *an*-root which in Abkhasian denotes the *mother*-notion.

Professor Marr shares only the first part of this view: he writes,[4] " . . . of great interest is the word *an*, god, which, in Abkhasian, appears usually as the plurale tantum *antswà*, God, lit. 'gods'."

In the summer of 1921, while in Abkhasia, in the village Adzvibzha (in Abzhua, the Kodor district), where I was sent by the Tiflis State University on a philological research study, I was able to collect certain data which threw more light on the question, as will be seen.

In the course of my research work, I was able to establish the validity of the formation of the word in question by the discovery

* For the pronunciation of *tsw* and *k'w*, see p. 118, n. *, and p. 131, n. *. (Translator's note.)

[1] Uslar, P. K., *The Abkhasian Language* (in Russian). Tiflis, 1887, p. 78.

[2] Dcharaia, P., *On the Relation of the Abkhasian Language to the Japhetic Languages*, in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics* (in Russian), St. Petersburg, 1912, vol. iv, pp. 31–3.

[3] Janashia, N., *The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, in *The Christian East* (in Russian), St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue i, pp. 74–5. [See the English translation in this number, pp. 118–9. Ed.]

[4] Marr, N., *From a Linguistic Journey to Abkhasia* in *Isvestiya* (Bulletin) of the Imperial Academy of Sciences (in Russian), St. Pb., 1913, vol. vii, No. 6, p. 315.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE ABKHASIANS

(From the materials on Abkhasian ethnography)

By N. S. JANASHIA

[A translation of the article published in *Khristianskii Vostok*, The Christian East, Petrograd, 1915, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 72–112.]

FOLLOWING the suggestion of N. Y. Marr that I should revise and translate into the Russian language my notes on "Materials on the ethnography of the Abkhasians", published 16–17 years ago in Georgian periodicals, chiefly in the journal *Moambe*, I made a careful review of all the collected "Materials", whether printed or still in manuscript form. In order to make the revision more complete I invited the aid of a special Commission from the Abkhasians of the village Adzvibzha, where the materials in question were actually collected.

The Commission consisted of the following persons: Mrs. Gidcha Janashia, my mother, with whose help the materials were checked originally; Kharikhan Tchengelia; Kelamat Delba, an eighty-year-old man, possessing a perfect knowledge of Abkhasian; Abdakhw Lolua, an orator; Alexis Dopua, who has a wide knowledge of tales and legends; Mushagw Tchengelia; and Alexis Janashia. The Commission worked with me for two days, the 2nd and 3rd July, 1914.

Furthermore, being still doubtful about certain aspects of my task, I checked the materials again at the meeting of the Adzvibzhuaans, during the month of August, and I found that all agreed in the main, differing only in matters of detail. One of my chief difficulties was that members of the Commission refused point blank to tell me tales I wanted to have in connection with my object, because "it is forbidden to tell tales in the daylight!" I therefore found it very hard to verify tales I had formerly taken down. So strong is the power of superstition nurtured for centuries! I am convinced that much that is incomprehensible in my "materials" would have been susceptible of explanation in the light of these tales.

All the ceremonies and rites herein presented are described by a man who has taken an active part in their observance; at first, during his childhood, when he was imbued with profound religious feeling, and later in life when, although no longer professing "faith", he approached them with the greatest interest with a view to their study. I have endeavoured to record all the details, discovering in them curious survivals preserved through the popular beliefs and customs of the Abkhasians. In my opinion these details represent invaluable material for the scientific study of religious observance.

I was at one time very much tempted to use the material I had

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE ABKHASIANS

(From the materials on Abkhasian ethnography)

By N. S. JANASHIA

[A translation of the article published in *Khristianski Vostok*, The Christian East, Petrograd, 1915, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 72–112.]

FOLLOWING the suggestion of N. Y. Marr that I should revise and translate into the Russian language my notes on "Materials on the ethnography of the Abkhasians", published 16–17 years ago in Georgian periodicals, chiefly in the journal *Moambe*, I made a careful review of all the collected "Materials", whether printed or still in manuscript form. In order to make the revision more complete I invited the aid of a special Commission from the Abkhasians of the village Adzvibzha, where the materials in question were actually collected. 114

The Commission consisted of the following persons: Mrs. Gidcha Janashia, my mother, with whose help the materials were checked originally; Kharikhan Tchengelia; Kelamat Delba, an eighty-year-old man, possessing a perfect knowledge of Abkhasian; Abdakhw Lolua, an orator; Alexis Dopua, who has a wide knowledge of tales and legends; Mushagw Tchengelia; and Alexis Janashia. The Commission worked with me for two days, the 2nd and 3rd July, 1914. 115

Furthermore, being still doubtful about certain aspects of my task, I checked the materials again at the meeting of the Adzvibzhuaans, during the month of August, and I found that all agreed in the main, differing only in matters of detail. One of my chief difficulties was that members of the Commission refused point blank to tell me tales I wanted to have in connection with my object, because "it is forbidden to tell tales in the daylight!" I therefore found it very hard to verify tales I had formerly taken down. So strong is the power of superstition nurtured for centuries! I am convinced that much that is incomprehensible in my "materials" would have been susceptible of explanation in the light of these tales. 124 [538] [128]

All the ceremonies and rites herein presented are described by a man who has taken an active part in their observance; at first, during his childhood, when he was imbued with profound religious feeling, and later in life when, although no longer professing "faith", he approached them with the greatest interest with a view to their study. I have endeavoured to record all the details, discovering in them curious survivals preserved through the popular beliefs and customs of the Abkhasians. In my opinion these details represent invaluable material for the scientific study of religious observance. 123

I was at one time very much tempted to use the material I had 121

1: Dzhanashvili L-4 (no date) 1894 RI3 Abkhaz RI3

Abkhazia and the Abkhaz

/Abkhaziya i abkhaztsy/

by M. G. Dzhanashvili

Tiflis: 1894

Zapiski Kavkazskago Otdiela Imperatorskago Russkago Geograficheskago Obshchestva /Memoirs of the Caucasus Section of the Imperial Russian Geographical Society/
Book XVI, pp. 1-59

Translated from the Russian by Aza Tugan and Elma Kasbek

Human Relations Area Files
1963

/Title page/

/iii/

/From the Editor/

104 In his compilatory article, "Abkhazia and the Abkhaz," which is placed in this sixteenth book of the Zapiski Otdiela, Mr. M. G. Dzhanashvili, in introducing Grusian and Askhaz words, has rendered them by means of the letters of the Russian alphabet, with the addition of two letters from the French alphabet (h and q) and one letter from the Grusian alphabet (ღ), in order to indicate the pronunciation of these words somewhat more accurately. The letter h is introduced by the author to indicate that the letter of the Russian alphabet with which it stands is to be pronounced with aspiration; the letter q is meant to indicate the deep- guttural k, and the Grusian letter ღ for the indication of a sound somewhat similar to a combination of the Russian letters t and ts /transliterated as ts'/. At the request of Mr. Dzhanashvili, who had neglected to explain this in his foreword, the editor is bringing this to the attention of the readers in order to prevent any misunderstanding which might arise during the reading of the article "Abkhazia and the Abkhaz." /Only the transliterated form of the native terms is given in the translation; where the author has used a special orthography for native terms, a note will refer the reader to the foreign text. The remainder of the editor's note has been omitted, since it is not pertinent to this article./

/1/ Abkhazia and the Abkhaz
(Ethnographic Sketch)

Foreword

101 The Abkhaz have been known since ancient times. Pliny (29-79 A. D.) calls them absilae; Arrian (100-160 A. D.) calls them apsilai (apsdai); the old Grusian chronicles refer to them as aphshili and aphsari. The Abkhaz call themselves aphsua and their country aphsn; the present-day Grusians give them various names: abkhazi, apkhazi, aphkhazi.

A 101 197 /1 cont./ From a comparison of these names it is evident that the ethnic name of the Abkhaz was formed from aps, abs, aphs, aphsh. In the languages of the Caucasus, the sounds b, p, ph, m, v, and also s and sh, frequently alternate. Here are some examples: a-m-seba = a-v-seba = ap-h-she-pha /sic/, meaning "to fill"; suli = shuri, "soul"; m-ravali = b-ravali = b-reli = ph-reli, "many"; p-rke = b-rke, etc. Thus the identity of abs, aps, aphs, and absh, aps /sic/, and aphsh is beyond doubt. What, then, does abs or aphsh mean?

A 193 First of all it must be said that in the Abkhaz language nouns are preceded by "a," corresponding to the meaning of the article le or la in the French language. In compounds this "a" is often dropped. Let us, by way of example, take identical words in the Grusian and Abkhaz languages:

A G 192

Grusian	Abkhaz	
khalakhi	a-khalakh	town
nathla	a-nathra	baptism
kambechi	a-kambash	buffalo
nana	a-nan	mother
kharthueli	a-khirthua	Grusian
lazi	a-laz	Laz
kaba	a-kaba	dress
/2/		
kaltha	a-kaltha	tails /of a coat/
kherkhi	a-khuarkhi	file
makrateli	a-makratil	scissors
kibe	a-kiba	stairs, ladder
gemo	a-gema	taste
khvabi	a-khvab	kettle
ugheli (Svan /Swan/: ughu)	a-ughu	yoke
guli (Svan:gui)	a-gu	heart
zari	a-zar	lament, sobbing

G 193 Frequently the Grusian language, too, has recourse to the method of forming nouns from verbal roots, with the addition at the end of the noun of the auxiliary verb li or ari (1)

1. ari = is; in the Grusian language and

G 193 /2 cont./ in its dialects this verb appears either in the form a (e.g., katsi-a = it is a man), or in the form li (ara-li = is not), or as ri or re (akhlo-re - it is near). Of these, the form ari is the most frequent in Grusian; re, ri, ro, in Mingrel; in Svan, li, ari; and in Abkhaz, l, r.

A G 197

(3rd person singular indicative, meaning "is"). For example, deg or dgi means "stand, stand firm"; a-deg or a-dgi = stand up; a-dgi-li = solid ground, earth, dry land. In the same way, nuskhe = count, m-nuskhe-li = counting, a-m-nuskhe-li = accountant.

A G 197

So the root consists merely of phs or phsh, which in many languages of the Caucasus, including Abkhaz and Grusian, has various related meanings: river, water, moisture, soul, spring, etc. For example, in Circassian, phdze or phse means "river, water"; in Grusian phsha means "river, brook, spring-water," phshe-na or phshi-nva = breathing, sigh, smell; m-phshueni- breathing, soul, spirit; phsa = to pour, phseli = urine; in Abkhaz, aphs = soul, aphsha = wind, air; adzi /see foreign text/ = water, river, brook; adzi-khi = well; adzi-zhi = lake; amshin = sea, etc.

A 101 174

It is well known that many ancient peoples got their names from the waters on whose banks they lived. We will recall, for instance, from ancient Slavic history, the Pomoryane, Polaby, Buzhane, and others (2).

2. "Settling in Europe, the Slavs gave to the rivers those most ancient names, brought over by them from the East, which originally were used as designations for river, or water in general. In this way the names Sava, Drava, Odra (Oder), Ra, Upa, Oka, Don, Dunai, Dvina, are of Aryan origin, and related forms and roots with the above-mentioned general meaning are found in

/2 cont./

101
194

Sanskrit; dhuni, dhūni (river) has retained its original meaning in the Caucasus, where among the Osset the forms dun and don refer to any river or body of water; among the Slavs, "Don" has become a proper name, and the form dun with the ending av has produced "Dunav," and then "Dunai." The word "Dunai," which serves as the proper name of the well-known river /the Danube/, is also still used as a name for all kinds of rivers, large and small. Examples can be found in Galician and Polish songs: "beyond the rivers -- beyond the dunai." (Afanas'ev, "Poeticheskiya vozzreniya slavyan na prirodu /Poetic views of the Slavs on nature/," II, 220).

/3/ We see the same thing in Georgia, too, where, in the majority of instances, the names of the provinces and of the tribes inhabiting them were formed from concepts meaning "river, spring, lake, water," etc. Thus, for instance, dcha means "spring, well, river"; dcha-ri = river; a-dchari= Adchara (in Turkish Georgia, Adzharia; dchari (river) = Dchar oblast (in Zakataly); dcha-ni means 'wells, rivers" -- dchan-ethi = Dchanetia (the Grusian name for all Turkish Georgia); dcharokhi = the river Dchorokh; dcha-la, "grove, river" -- dchala-didi = Dchaladidi (literally "large river").

Phsha = rivulet, Phsha-ethi = Pshaviia; Phsha = river near Gori, river in Guria, in Adzharia, and in other places; Abasha (the ancient Aphsha) = river in Imeretia; Phasisi (the ancient Phsisi) = the river Phaz, Phas (literally, "river-"; phasisi is the genitive case).

From this same root comes a-phshi-li, exactly as a-dgi-li comes from dgi. Literally translated, a-phshi-li must mean "river." This I find the fullest resemblance between the

/3 cont./

101 174 names aphshili, phshaeli (Pshav), and Abasheli = Absheli (dweller on the banks of the river Abashi). The same meaning is also found in the word "Absari," in which, instead of the substantive verb ali, its other form ari appears (Abs-ari = Abs-ali); and since the Grusian ari, ali, and their abbreviated forms, ri, li, change to a and ua in Abkhaz (kharthu-ali = akhirthu-a = Grusian, guruli = a-gura-a = Gurian, me-gre-li = a-gru-a = Mingrel), we also have absua = Abkhaz, i.e., Grusian abshi-li (Abkhaz) = Abkhazian absu-a, with the same meaning.

From this same root are derived the names of many rivulets in Abkhazia, such as Phshitsa (a tributary of the Bzyb), Phshandra (near the village of Lykhny), the river Phstse, the river Khashu-Phse, the Phsbu, Tua-phse, etc.

/4/ The Circassians, of the same tribe as the Abkhaz and called adzikhi, adzigi, adzegi by the natives, got their name from the same root, dzi or dze, meaning "water, river, sea." As mentioned above, phse or phdze means "water, river" in Circassian; it has the same meaning in both Grusian and Abkhaz. Besides, in these latter languages from the same root were formed the words zghua or dzughva (Grusian, Mingrel and Svan) meaning "sea," adzizhi (Abkhaz) = lake, adzikhi (Abkhaz) = well, spring water. In this way, then the adzikhi (Circassians) came to be called by such a name. In exactly the same way, the word shapsugi from Grusian literally means "river-, living near the river" (sha-phsu-gi = sa-phsu-gi = sa-phshu-gi means in translation "where water -- there").

The most interesting of all is another word in Grusian, tba, meaning "lake." This word is found in the old literary monuments and today in the Mingrelian dialect and is pronounced the same way, toba; the Svan pronounce it tibar, sometimes tuibar, meaning "lake," as well as "deep ravine," and in general "deep hollow." In texts dated as early as the tenth century we find the name of the ancient Grusian province of Tbetha, in the center of which are the splendid ruins of the famous church of Tbetha, built by Ashot Kukh (died in 918). Tbetha means "lake region,

/4 cont./

101 194 lakes"; Tbeli and tobeli (1) mean "little lake, lake-, located

1. "Tbeli" (pronounced "tobeli" in Mingrel) has been the title of the bishops of Tbetha since 918 A.D.

or living near a lake." And I can find no difference whatsoever between the Grusian Tobeli and the biblical Thobeli, which on Kipert's map occupy exactly the spot where the Grusian province of Tobetha (Tobeli) is located.

Greco-Roman authors sometimes refer to these Thobeli as Tibareni, and this name is also the Grusian Tobeli or, in the Svan pronunciation, "Tibar." In the plural of this word we have "Tibareni," i.e., Tibarians = lake-dwellers. Hecataeus (ca. 550 B.C.) calls them Tipanisi (Tipanisse), which is a genitive plural and in Grusian means "those of the lakes." The Greco-Roman authors consider the Tipanisi, Tibareny, to be a people related to the Moskhi and the Kolkhi. From this same root we now have a multitude of /5/ names such as Tobarovani (rich in lakes), Lake Taparavan; Tobanieri (lake-), village in Imeretia (near Kutais); Toba-qure (lake-bay), village in Mingrelia; Didi-tba, great lake, near Tsarskie Kolodtsy; Tubanis-tba, lakish-lake, in the Akhalkalaki uyezd; Tqe-toba (forest-lake) in the Zakataly okrug, and others.

Reserving the right to return on some other occasion to a more detailed exposition of my views on the origin of the ethnic names of the Kartvelian people, I shall continue now with a brief historical sketch of Abkhazia.

195 The Grusian chronicles, the authenticity and ancientness of which were refuted by the late K.P. Patkanov, but which are fully substantiated anew by the discovered Grusian chronicle of the first half of the tenth century, testify that the propagator of Christianity in Abkhazia was Simon the Canaanite, who was in Georgia together with the apostle Andrew. Both apostles entered Adzharia, from where Andrew set out for Meskhetia (to Akhaltsikh),

/5 cont./

175 and Simon the Canaanite for Imeretia and Abkhazia. Although the latter fell victim here to heathens, the seeds of Christianity scattered by him did not die without a trace; they sprouted in the course of two to three centuries, and the heathen world shone forth with the light of Christian teaching. On the place where [178] Simon the Canaanite was killed, a temple was erected which attracts a multitude of pilgrims even now.

We also have information from the Greco-Roman authors concerning Christianity in Abkhazia and Georgia. For instance, Procopius, an author of the end of the sixth century, says: "Christianity has nowhere been preserved in such a pure form as in Iveria /Iberia/." Further: "Since the reign of Justinian Augustus, the customs of the Abkhaz have been noticeably mollified because of their adoption of Christianity. Justinian sent to them one of his eunuchs, Everrat, an Abkhaz by birth, with the object of stopping the princes from producing castrates. Justinian also built in the country of the Abkhaz a temple to the Mother of God and appointed priests and saw to it that the latter spread Christianity" (1).

1. Brosset, Histoire de la Géorgie, St. Petersburg, 1856, 4to, II, p. 240.

The temple of the Mother of God mentioned by Procopius is the famous temple of Bichvinta (Pitsunda), which from the earliest times has played a prominent role, not only in the religious life, but also in the political life of the Abkhaz. The Abkhazian eristav /governor of a province/ /6/ Leon II, taking advantage of Georgia's weakness after two Arab military invasions, made himself independent of the king of Georgia, Dzhuansher, and assumed the title of King of Abkhazia in 786. As the capital of his kingdom he selected Bichvinta, where the Catholicoi were already installed. The independence of the Abkhaz kingdom lasted two centuries in all. David the Great, King of Georgia, being childless, adopted Bagrat III (980-1014), born of the marriage of Gurgen, the heir to the Georgian throne, and Gurandukhta, the daughter of George II, King of Abkhazia.

/6 cont./

175 And since the male line of the Abkhaz kings was cut off with the death of the blind king Theodosius II, the Abkhaz kingdom, by right of the closest relation to that house, together with the appanages of the Bagratids of Samtskhe, was united with the Grusian kingdom, and Bagrat III assumed the title of the Grusian and the Abkhaz King. Since that time the Catholicoi of Mtskheta have assumed the title of the Catholicoi "of all Georgia" and sometimes "of all Georgia and Abkhazia." In the florescent period of Grusian history (tenth to twelfth centuries) all Abkhazia and especially its coastal parts were covered with towns, monasteries, churches, and fortified castles. From the end of the 177 fifteenth century on, i.e. upon the fall of Byzantium and the 175 replacement of the cross in the Hagia Sophia by the crescent, Mohammedanism gradually began to spread in Abkhazia; this trend was further favored by the circumstance that in that same century Georgia, weakened and ruined in the century-old struggle with the Mongols and later with the Persians and Turks, broke up in the fifteenth century into three kingdoms (Kakhetia, Kartlia, and Imeretia) and five principalities (Samtskhe, Svanetia, Mingrelia, Abkhazia, and Guria); moreover, the Turks subjugated Adzharia and began to spread Mohammedanism there. At this time also the Caucasian mountaineers (Lezgi /Lezgin/, Chechen, North Osset, Circassians, and others) renounced Christianity and accepted Mohammedanism. Georgia, surrounded on all sides by Mohammedanism, managed with difficulty to preserve her religion, but weak and small Abkhazia was unable to do so; Mohammedan doctrine spread widely there and would have completely swallowed up Christianity if the Georgians had not in good time called the Colossus of the North to the defense of all the ancient aborigines of the Caucasus.

127 In the compilation of the present ethnographical sketch of Abkhazia, the author has used as source-material and texts the following articles by Abkhazians: 1. "Abkhaziya i Abkhaztsy /Abkhazia and the Abkhaz/," an ethnographical sketch by P. Giorgidze, published in Iveriia, 1888; 2. "Abkhaziya," /7/ an ethnographical sketch by K. Madchavariani, in the newspaper

/7 cont./

127 Droeba, 1884-1885; 3. "Ocherk Abkhazskoy mifologii /Sketch of Abkhaz Mythology/," by verovaniya abkhaztsev /Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A., in the Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh, No. V; and 5. "Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie tuzemnago naseleniya Sukhumskago otdiela /The Economic Condition of the Native Population of the Sukhum District/," same author, in the same Sbornik, VI.

M. Dzhanashvili. April 25, 1892, Tiflis.

/8/

ooo

I.

Abkhazia and the Abkhaz

The Abkhaz -- His Character -- Robberies, Raids, and Thieving -- Eloquence of the Abkhaz -- Blood Vengeance -- Love of Homeland -- Hospitality, Politeness, and Friendliness -- Honesty -- Values -- Folk Games -- Poetry.

142 The Abkhaz is a mountaineer of medium stature, slender,
181 swarthy, with black hair and eyes. He is fearless, brave, and proud, but at the same time capricious and extremely quick-tempered. Besides his inborn giftedness, his beauty, and, in general, the likeable aspects of his character, he also exhibits quite a few negative traits, of which we shall speak below.

579 Since the most ancient times the Abkhaz have been known as the most fearless and daring of robbers. They constantly raided their neighbors, pillaging and ruining them. For that matter, the habit of robbing and raiding is common to all the mountaineers in general. "Without robbery and raids, life is not worth living to a mountaineer," says Sergei Mech in his work. All his poetry, all the beauty of his existence is in this trait of the mountaineer. Only the tiger can be compared to the mountaineer in the suddenness and swiftness of his attack on a sleeping village in the deep, dark night. Going for plunder, the mountaineer is sure that

/8 cont./

579 nothing will give him away or betray him, neither his dagger, always kept in a sheath, nor the glitter of his rifle, wrapped in a cover, nor the soft, inaudible steps of his feet outfitted in bast shoes, nor his horse, well-trained for night-riding, nor, finally, his tongue, the hissing sounds of which resemble the rustling of leaves... With bloodshot eyes, his dagger in one hand and his pistol in the other, the mountaineer throws himself into the battle with a frightful whoop, and at this moment he forgets everything but victory... Such are the Abkhaz and their neighbors.

Even now the Abkhaz looks upon thieving as an act of boldness, of heroism, /9/ and almost as much of a necessity as food and drink. All the Abkhaz, from the small to the great, suffer equally from this ailment -- men, women, and children, and the Abkhazian upper class have even made it their regular occupation. Times and circumstances change, generation after [198] generation slowly but steadily introduces new cultural principles into Abkhaz life -- and robbery alone remains the favorite occupation, as though hallowed by the authority of a hoary antiquity...

867 As a matter of fact, what is surprising about it? While still a child, the Abkhaz is subjected to the irresistible influence of the circumstances surrounding him and of all possible elemental forces. And as he grows up, he acts according to these external elemental influences or internal moral influences. Now, to what forces is the Abkhaz exposed in his youth, and what moral principles does he derive from the phenomena and facts of nature and the milieu around him?... There he is, as a child, holding in his hand a knife with a handle bigger than he is, pasturing buffalo or goats in the forest or in the mountains, and he observes what goes on before his eyes: here a fox, lying in wait for a careless wild chicken, catches its prey and carries it into the depths of the forest to finish it off; there a half-starved wolf snatches a lamb from the herd, under the eyes of the unwary shepherd -- a boy like himself; and there, farther away, a bird of prey, waiting until the right moment, shoots down like an arrow upon one of the weaker forest-dwellers and, sinking its claws into its body, flies up with its prey and disappears into

/9 cont./

867 the blue skies... and so it is, day after day. These very same examples of unpunished robbery and violence, repeated daily, must leave deep traces in the conscience of the observant young shepherd. Upon his return home, phenomena he has observed in nature are consolidated and, as it were, sanctified in his eyes by the authority of the older members of the family: every day there are discussions and squabbles about the loss or stealing of cattle; on the one hand, he hears words of praise and approval applied to stealing, and, on the other hand, curses addressed to the thief; finally he sees how the housewife, the lawfulness of whose behavior he has never once thought of doubting, very cautiously digs up the buried meat of an animal stolen from the neighbors and cooks it... And when the child, grown wise by
867 observing his mileu and by the successful experiences of his
579 relatives, /10/ matures into a grown youth, his parents and the leading members of the family in general provide him with arms, having given him their blessing beforehand with the words: "Now make your own living, make your fortune by thievery and robbery, the same as all the people your age." Hence, thievery here has not only the status of an example worthy to be followed when the proper occasion presents itself; it is presented as an obligatory modus vivendi, as a dogma, sanctioned by the authority of the parents and of the older members of the family in general.

867 Let us turn our attention to still another circumstance. As
579 is well known, children love fairy tales and all kinds of stories
538 and legends. In the long winter nights, the old men and women tell stories to the Abkhaz children. But the majority of such tales are likewise harmful from the point of view of moral influence, for the contents of these legends, fairy tales, and stories go no further than eulogies of stealing, robbery, and raiding; in them are sung the praises of the daring, determination, and bravery of some "abrag" (abrek = bandit), of his resourcefulness as a thief, his keen-wittedness when in difficulties, his audacity in robbing and seizing another man's property. This may provide a partial explanation of the regrettable phenomenon in the life of the Abkhaz, that even persons who have had a modicum of secondary education

/10 cont./

867 immediately upon their return home revert to the practice ac-
579 quired in childhood -- stealing. This is of course not the fault of the school or of secondary education, but of the traditional views on this "trade," contact with which kills every other way of looking at it, as the lone wheat-stalk is smothered among the weeds that surround it.

579 In his stealing, the Abkhaz is treacherous. The best of friends, to all appearances, do not hesitate to steal from each other, and in Abkhazia it is no rare thing for brother to steal from brother, father from son, or son from father. It is almost proverbial that when an Abkhaz has no one to steal from, he robs himself. There have been instances of an Abkhaz stealing a horse from a neighbor on a dark night, taking it miles and miles away and exchanging it for another, riding back home on this fresh horse the same night, and the next morning, the minute his neighbor raised the alarm, rushing over and being the first to offer his sympathy and joining the chorus of people calling down curses on the thief and dashing off with the others in frenzied pursuit.

685 The Abkhaz thief will not admit his crime, even /11/ when
579 he could be convicted on the evidence of witnesses. When a
692 robbery case is tried at village meetings, a decision of the judge in favor of the accused is not infrequently influenced by the audacity of the latter's pretexts, by his shameless subterfuges, and by his so-called "talking circles around them." In general at such
[537] meetings, any exhibition of sly rhetoric, however shameless, on the part of a notorious thief finds not only attentive listeners but even admirers. "He saved himself by the bravery of his speech," they say in such cases.

And though such "eloquence" on the part of the thief often saves the guilty one from punishment, the victim, understandably, does not believe in his innocence and tries to get back at him at the proper moment for his losses, according to the formula of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

682 At present vengeance for spilled blood is on the wane, but at one time it was one of the most important features of Abkhaz life. The custom of blood-revenge puts the relatives of a person

/11 cont./

682 killed under the obligation of killing either the murderer or one of the latter's relatives. A blood-feud passes from generation to generation and is a person's sacred duty; unavenged blood is considered a shame and a disgrace for the living relatives of the person killed. The Abkhaz believe that if for some reason or other blood remains unavenged, it will avenge itself.

In case the killer himself managed to escape, a relative
[628] of his was held responsible; he was killed, captured, or robbed and finally ruined. Even the killing of the meanest slave often led to clashes involving whole villages; if a mutual understanding and peace were not restored among them, the result of such a feud would be that one of the villages had to face ruin or move away to another place.

682 In blood-feuds the descent of the persons involved played
565 an important role. If, for instance, a prince killed a peasant, the relatives of the latter had no right to avenge the blood of the killed upon the killer, for "the blood of a peasant is not equal to that of a prince." Therefore, instead of the prince himself,
[608] it was his foster father who had to pay for the blood shed by the prince.

There were different settlements for the blood of a peasant, a nobleman, or a prince.

Although the personal qualities of a man commanded /12/ special attention in Abkhazia the blood of a peasant was nevertheless valued lower than the blood of a nobleman, and that of the latter lower than the blood of a prince. For instance, if the blood of a peasant was valued at five human souls, then the blood of a nobleman was worth three times more, and that of a prince five times more than the blood of a peasant. The price
[435] of a life was determined in terms of spans /pyad'/. A soul (person) four spans tall was valued at 30 cows or 30 rubles in silver; one of five spans, 50 cows or 50 silver rubles; and one of six spans, 70 cows or 70 rubles in silver. Arms and clothing were added as supplementary payment. Blood was paid off with cows, goats, sheep, and beehives. The number of the latter was determined on the basis of the value of a cow.

/12 cont./

682 If the blood-price was not paid within a certain period, then
426 at the end of the year, in place of a debt of four spans, five were owed, in place of five, six, and six became seven, so that an already considerable debt increased still more and weighed like a heavy burden on the shoulders of the debtor. But the Abkhaz had one excellent custom -- that of coming to the aid of an insolvent debtor. All the latter had to do was to announce that he "owed for blood," and everybody contributed his mite to pay off the debt.

796 The following ceremony was considered the best way to a
687 complete reconciliation of the parties involved in a blood-feud.
608 A relative of the killer gave a banquet and, through intermediaries, invited the claimant of blood himself or his son. It was sufficient to persuade the claimant of blood to touch his lips to the breast of the wife or mother of the debtor, and, as a result of this action alone, everlasting and indissoluble peace would be restored between them. If, on the other hand, the blood-avenger would not be appeased and would not come to the feast, then those acting for the other side endeavored to abduct the son or some other close relative of the claimant or in some other way get such a person into their house. If they succeeded, then peace was restored whether the avenger liked it or not, for to kill the foster father was considered a violation and desecration of the "breast" and
186 beneath the dignity of a brave man. Love of homeland is developed to the highest degree in the Abkhaz. Some peoples say, ubi bene, ibi patria, but the Abkhaz, on the other hand, prays: "There is no better place in the world than Abkhazia. God, save Abkhazia." In both grief and happiness alike, the Abkhaz repeats this prayer.

574 As is the case with all ancient peoples, hospitality is piously honored and maintained in Abkhazia. The Abkhaz is convinced that every guest is accompanied by seven "baraka" (blessing, /13/ bliss, abundance), one of which remains with the host, and God gives back to the guest this seventh baraka. Even the poorest Abkhaz does his utmost to treat his guest as well as possible; when an Abkhaz sees a traveler going along the village

/13 cont./

574 road in the evening, he immediately greets him, "bziala vahbeit" -- "it is good to see you!" Then he invites the traveler into his house; "Come in and rest, where are you going now? Spend the night in our house, and early in the morning go your way." If the traveler, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, accepts the invitation and puts up at the host's house, he receives a warm reception and is wonderfully well regaled. And if the traveler does not accept the invitation, he replies, "ubeikht" (grow rich, thank you) and continues on his way. The custom of hospitality protects the traveler even from blood-vengeance. Once he is someone's guest, no one has the right to touch him.

181 888 Along with his hospitality and generosity, the Abkhaz is also courteous, polite, and respectful, especially to older persons. Here are a few examples.

515 516 [264] Before taking any food the Abkhaz usually wash their hands. But the washing is performed in order of seniority, the ablution of the hands beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest of those attending the banquet. The same order is observed in drinking wine. But on such occasions the oldest person does not lag behind either. In the beginning he renounces his right of priority and invites the person next in rank to drink wine or to wash his hands first. This is required by the custom of courtesy and politeness. But, of course, the younger person flatly refuses the honor offered him. Finally, after many mutual compliments and words of persuasion, the first one (the oldest) accepts the invitation after all. Then the same ceremony is gone through between the second and the third, the third and the fourth, and so on, down to the youngest person attending. Furthermore, while the oldest persons are washing their hands, the younger ones are obliged to remain standing. Here again there is ceremony, exhortations for them to sit down, but if those who are urged to do so ignore these exhortations and continue to stand, then the older person considers it improper to

576 wash his hands sitting down, and he also stands up. The question of which of two persons shall first cross the threshold and

/13 cont./

5176 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a [608] [755] long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge mtsuge seizgat," i.e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging 181 the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children [565] of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, [411] dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the [293] constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

526 Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games [541] are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 538 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[931] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[541] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special com-
[233] partment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the
[252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the
[415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is
352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some
415 of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd
412 is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family
585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

/17 cont./

342 [585] newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one small house.

262 The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten, [263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all re- [888] ligious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all [593] family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place; the parents are 428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided [592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz

562 woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than
462 the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes
[565] toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites,
[535] funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men and dance with them. There have been instances of women
[579] being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

562 If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the
586 Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and
[692] defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

/18 cont./

III.

Education -- The Educated -- The Educators

565 While the upper class in Abkhazia enjoyed privilege and
566 power, the situation of the lower classes was one of great oppression; /19/ the batoni (master, feudal lord) looked upon his
[567] subject, his slave, as a commodity; he could sell or pawn him according to circumstances. However, even after the abolition
[579] of slavery, the position of the peasantry did not improve, due to the fact that the nobility did not cease from robbery and pillage and plunder until the most recent times.

565 Under such a state of affairs, all the peasantry could do
608 was to resign itself to feudal conditions and try, wherever possible, to get protection. The best method lay in the custom of adoption, or the rearing of the sons of the aristocrats by the peasants. Thanks to this custom, the aristocrats themselves were strengthened, for in this way they gained in the peasants their most faithful supporters, while at the same time freeing their wives from the onerous duty of bringing up and feeding their own children. This is the reason that in all Abkhazia there is not a single peasant who has not reared one or several princes and nobles; as a consequence of this custom, hardly one per cent of the nobles have been nursed at their own mother's breast.

Before the beginning of childbirth in a family of the aristocracy (didebuli), on the one hand relatives and acquaintances and, on the other hand, the future foster-mothers of the expected child, accompanied by their husbands and female relatives in order to be able to bear the newborn foster-child back to their village with due ceremony, begin to gather around the pregnant
844 woman. During the childbirth, girls from the village also come to
565 visit the expectant mother in order to distract her and to relieve
[533] her sufferings during labor with gay songs and the telling of fables
[538] and fairy tales. The husband is absent during this time. According to the customs of the country, he is not allowed to be present when his wife gives birth and therefore leaves the home. Above

/19 cont./

844 565 the bed of the expectant mother a cord is suspended from the ceiling, which she can grasp during the severe pains and spasms of childbirth. It is indecent for her to let her moans and screams reach the ears of her parents-in-law; she must staunchly bear her sufferings so as not to lose their respect forever. At last the child is delivered. The birth of a boy brings more joy to the [842] mother than the birth of a girl, as it gives her more respect and honor in the eyes of society, but she is not particularly saddened by the birth of a daughter either, for it still serves as proof of her fertility. The newborn child is left in the care of the wet nurse [608 853] (the wife of the foster father), and the female relatives congratulate the new mother on the happy /20/ outcome of the delivery. The mother, too, is happy, and most of all, of course, because with the passing of the baby into the care of others she herself will soon recover and, free from caring for it, can more easily preserve her beauty and freshness of face. In a few days her husband returns and in his turn congratulates her on the delivery of her child (1).

1. Cf. the excellent article, "Abkhazia," by K. Machavariani in the newspaper Iveriia, 1884, No. 275.

608 565 On the day set for the departure of the wet nurse with the newborn baby, the parents give a banquet and give her the materials for a dress, for underwear, and for all the appurtenances for the child's cradle, a copper kettle to bathe it in, and other small articles.

From this day on the foster mother receives the honorary title of anadzdzei (nurse, foster mother), and both she and her husband, the abadzdzei (foster father), are held in universal respect; upon its entry into the house of the foster father and mother, the baby is recognized as a ward (akhupha) of the family to which the foster father belongs.

The foster parents cherish the child in due fashion and maintain him in comfort and contentment. After two or three [931] years the child is taken to its parents, along with presents consisting of one or two bulls, a goat, capons, wine, bread, etc.

/20 cont./

565 608 In the house of the child's parents, another banquet is held, to which the neighbors are also invited. On this occasion all kinds of honors are shown to the foster mother and her husband. The foster parents are granted the right to be the first to wash their hands, and upon their return home the parents of the child must seat them on their horses, i.e., when they mount, the stirrups on the other side must be held. The foster parents return home with [431] the child, loaded with all kinds of presents, animals, clothes, money.

The foster child remains with the foster parents during the course of eight or nine years, and then it is taken to the real parents. It hardly need be said that the child, having spent its early years in someone else's home, where it grew up and learned to walk, talk, and to love its foster mother and those surroundings, now has difficulty in adjusting itself to the new situation -- at [154] first the father's house seems almost like a prison to him. For this reason the child is allowed to visit the foster parents frequently. If the foster child is an orphan, however, he remains in the home and under the care of his foster parents until he is married.

/21/ The foster child is obligated to defend the interests of the foster parents, i.e. of that family whose members reared him. He is required, for instance, to search for a lost article belonging to his foster parents, to find the thief and to call him to account, and it is a great disgrace to him if he is unable to do this. In the same way, if someone offends the foster parents and they are not strong enough to pay back the insult, their ward must stand up for them. Let us suppose, for instance, that some prince has beaten a peasant. In this case the ward of the injured peasant must de- [683] mand satisfaction, not from the princely offender himself, for "his blood is unequal to that of a peasant," but from his foster parent, a peasant, and he is the one who has to answer for the insult inflicted upon the foster parent of another prince. If a peasant foster-father gets into any kind of trouble, his princely ward endeavors by hook or by crook to rescue him from his difficulties. In such cases, if the ward himself is still immature and unable to help his foster parents, then his parents act in his place.

/21 cont./

565 608 This, however, does not exhaust the role of the ward with regard to his foster parent. He is the main character in the joys and sorrows of his foster parent; in all the occasions of his life that have any importance. Thus, when his foster mother, or her [765] husband, or one of their children dies, he bewails them bitterly, dresses in mourning, lets his hair grow, buys the coffin at his own [764] expense, and takes care of the arrangements and the ceremonial for the mourning and the funeral of the deceased. When the funeral banquet is given, he provides a sheep or a horse and again arranges everything. The ward also is the main character [583] when the son of his foster mother abducts a girl to be his wife; if the relatives of the girl pursue the abductor, the princely ward comes to his aid with words and weapons and does not give up the abducted girl; subsequently he keeps her at his house until the matter is definitely settled, for none of the relatives of the abducted girl would dare to attack his home.

If, on the other hand, the marriage of the son or daughter [584] of the foster father is arranged peacefully by the voluntary consent of both sides, then here, too, the princely ward is considered the bridegroom's best man and presents the bride with money, a horse, etc.

The foster parents in turn do not fail to perform their duties with regard to their ward, whom they call their sun, their /22/ sacredness, and by whose name they swear. Every year at [431] Christmastide they give him presents, such as cheese, capons, and bread; at Easter, a lamb or a kid and "chumukhkvati." These presents are the obligatory outward signs of sincere liking and friendship on the part of lesser ones ("lower brotherhood") towards those of higher rank; with their cessation the mutual friendship is also broken off.

The sons of the foster mother are usually the bosom friends [509] and accomplices of the ward in his nocturnal thieving adventures. That is why a prince or nobleman always takes the sons of his foster mother with him on his thieving expeditions; he knows that

/22 cont./

565 608 [579] [764] [765] they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for him if necessary. When a ward dies, the grief and sorrow of the foster parents are unbounded; for his funeral they furnish a shroud and money; they also bring one or two bulls, sheep, etc. for the funeral repast for the deceased. When their ward marries, they give him all kinds of assistance through their personal labor. They [585] also present him with fattened animals and bring presents to his bride as well.

608 565 796 Among the Abkhaz another type of wardship also exists, namely, that of an adult man being invited to assume the role of ward. The Abkhaz peasant invites such a man with the words, "I wish to take you into my house and honor you according to my means." On the appointed day, the person invited goes to the house of his future foster father and takes along a few additional people. During the supper the host and his relatives kneel down in front of their ward-to-be and give him a glass of wine; they then stand and one of them addresses to him the following speech: "From this day on we regard you as having been nursed in our family; we are of the same spirit as you and will begrudge you nothing; we hope that you, too, will begrudge us nothing; you will be held in higher esteem than the other wards." After this they present him with a few rubles and give something to his companions (khadzh /see foreign text/). While handing over the presents, they say, "Vadcha enup" (a present for you). This ceremony ends in the following way: on a carpet, spread on the floor, a chest is placed, on which the wife of the host of the house, i.e., the future foster mother, seats herself; the other women surround her. Then the ward-to-be enters through the open door, stands in front of the hostess seated on the chest, greets her, /23/ and thrice touches with his lips the nipple of her breast, or, as the Abkhaz say, "bites her nipples three times"; after each time he repeats, "from this day on you are my own mother." And indeed, from 608 565 this time on exactly the same mutual relations obtain between them as in the first case where another's child is fully reared. It need hardly be said that, besides the princes and nobles, the

/23 cont./

608 565 peasants also rear the children of clergymen, of merchants, and even of other peasants. There are also cases of even nobles taking in and rearing the sons of strong and influential princes on the same basis.

IV.

Marriage

583 Some fifteen years ago the groom usually abducted a girl for a wife; that is to say, without the consent of the girl's parents or her own consent, he carried out an attack upon her with the help of his comrades and led her away by force. Such cases are rare nowadays. On the contrary, abductions are now for the greater part carried out with the consent of the bride herself, though not infrequently against the will of her parents. In the latter case, the one chosen as a bride comes at night to a previously arranged place a few versts from the parental home. The groom comes to the same place with his comrades, on horses. She mounts a horse brought especially for her, and the whole cavalcade gallops back to the home of the groom or to that of some influential person. No pursuers are able to take the bride away from the abductors, for they are prepared, if necessary, to fight to the last drop of blood for her. Soon after the abduction the girl herself announces publicly that the abduction took place according to her personal wishes and that she can be happy only with her abductor. Mutual negotiations are now [584] initiated and everything ends in peace; the son-in-law brings presents to the mother and the father of the bride, and the case is closed.

584 583 [558] It must be noted that the Abkhaz never abducts a girl lower in standing than himself. This would be considered a loss of honor for the abductor. On the contrary, everybody tries to abduct a girl of higher or at least equal birth. To propose to a [154] girl and to receive a refusal either from her or from her parents

/23 cont./

584 [583] [54] is considered a mortal insult; /24/ in this case abduction is considered the only way of satisfying one's injured self-esteem. But usually marriage negotiations are conducted in Abkhazia by female matchmakers or by intermediaries. If they bring the matter to a happy conclusion, their labors are rewarded with the [465] heads and hides of the oxen that are butchered for the wedding. As soon as a mutual understanding has been reached, the bride and groom, after an exchange of presents, set a day for a meeting.

At the designated time, the groom and his friends set out, with presents, for the house of the parents of the bride. A [583] princely groom sometimes brings as many as 20 or 30 horses, of which many are saddled. Now a feast is held at the groom's [574] expense. During the banquet the friends of the groom, on the one hand, and those invited by the bride's parents, on the other, try in all possible ways to outdo each other in witticisms, puns, eloquence, in the amount of wine consumed, in singing, etc. The next day the comrades of the groom receive various presents and the groom himself receives a horse, or money and arms. Then the comrades return home, while the son-in-law remains in the house of the bride's parents with his delegate (dade).

But the future son-in-law still feels extremely ill at ease. According to the custom of the country, he may not yet show himself to the parents of the bride or their relatives. He is wrapped in a burka, and his head and face are wrapped in a bashlyk, under which only his eyes are barely visible. On the first night, during the feast, he hides himself somewhere outside and spends the night in a neighboring house. On the next day he is forcibly taken to the bride's house. But even now he does not dare to sit down and remains standing by the door, leaving it to his delegate to speak for him. In general it is not [606] proper for the young son-in-law to eat with his parents-in-law, or sometimes even to sit down with them at the table. In some places, husband and wife never appear together before the wife's parents. This is considered shameful.

The bride takes up residence in a small house (amhara),

/24 cont./

584 from which she does not emerge until a feast is held in the big house. Then she is led into the house, and one of the elderly friends of the family, or the father himself, puts a piece of liver on a spit and begins to pray and to express wishes that the couple before him may be happy, prolific, etc.

When the groom returns from the house of his bride's parents to that of his father, he again is not allowed to show himself to his parents and older relatives. This, too, would be considered /25/ indecent. He does not appear until after the feast has been given by his father. Now the same blessings and wishes that were given when the bride was led out of her amhara are repeated, and the groom gives presents to his mother, father, uncle, foster father, and in general to all older relatives. This feast bears the name aphkhasharkhe (portion of shame, remover of shame).

585 After the preparation of the dowry, the bride's parents
[583] invite their future son-in-law in order to entrust their daughter to him; at the appointed time the groom comes to get her with his friends and her girl-friends. On the way home with the bride,
[533] the marriage song bedniera (happiness) is sung, there is trick-
[526] riding on horses, pistol-shooting, etc. When they are approaching the house of the groom, they send someone ahead to announce the arrival of the bride to the groom's father and mother. Such a messenger stops somewhere near the gates of the house and
[202] without a word fires a pistol in the air. In the house he is offered some honey or sugar.

Meanwhile the wedding procession reaches the house. Here the friends and girl-friends amuse themselves for a while with a huge round loaf of wheaten bread, throwing it three times over the bride and over the house and breaking it into pieces, which are picked up by those present. After this the bride is led into the house, at the entrance of which two men hold swords crossed overhead. At the threshold she is offered honey or sugar, with the words, "May God give you a tongue as sweet." After the bride enters the house she is handed a cup filled with grains of gomi, on top of which an egg has been placed. Then she is led three times around the hearth while she scatters the grains of gomi. The bride is then seated, and they hand her a little boy

/25 cont./

585 as a sort of prediction that she, too, will give birth to a boy. A little later the bride is brought to the separate small house (amhara), and then the real wedding-feast begins.

On the second and third days the relatives come, meet the bride, and bring her presents, each according to his means. When they want to get acquainted with the bride, a friend of hers, her delegate (dade), lifts from her face the veil with which she is covered; the visitors greet the bride, and she, without saying a word, stands erect and quietly, with her eyes lowered. The responses are not made by her, but by her friend. When sufficient time has elapsed after the wedding, /26/ she answers questions addressed to her, but, instead of saying "yes" or "no," she only shakes her head.

The young bride remains in the amhara for some months; [597] then she is invited into the main house, and from this time on the whole care of the household is put on her shoulders. She always tries to satisfy her parents-in-law and to act according to their wishes. For several months she does not speak to anyone; afterwards she begins to speak, first to the younger people in the house and in the village, and later on also to the older ones, and last of all to her parents-in-law. The young bride is referred to by all the villagers as "our daughter-in-law"; they bring her various kinds of sewing-work, which she does without reward.

602 For many years the young couple avoids being seen together by the husband's parents, and they cannot eat together [606] in their presence as long as they live. In conversation with older [264] people, whether relatives or strangers, the wife cannot refer to her husband as "my husband," nor the husband to his wife as "my wife." The daughter-in-law may not sit down on the bench on [606] which her father-in-law or mother-in-law have been seated. [551] The wife can never call her husband by name and in cases of necessity manages instead with the pronouns "you" and "he." In the same way, she does not call by name her brother-in-law, her husband's foster parents, members of the family, the village elders, etc. The husband, on the other hand, only

avoids

/26 cont./

602 avoids pronouncing the name of his wife. When the wife's father
[606] and mother first visit their son-in-law, he must offer them presents in the same way as when he himself with his wife first visits the wife's parents.

V.

Mourning and Burial of the Dead

758
574 In general the Abkhaz are very compassionate towards the sick and never leave alone a person who is seriously ill. When the villagers are informed that one of their number is seriously ill, all of them without fail will visit him, inquire about his illness, encourage him, and try to cheer him. The patient is visited not only by his relatives, but also by all the other villagers, irrespective of their title or means. They usually come to visit the patient in the evening and spend the whole night with him, singing, dancing, or telling stories, making jokes, etc., with the object of somehow /27/ cheering the invalid and relieving his sufferings in one way or another. The sick are treated with home remedies, old wise-women say prayers over them, etc.

763 As soon as a patient dies, the women instantly break out in deafening wails and soul-shaking screams, at the same time tearing out their hair, scratching their bodies, beating themselves on the face and head, and so on. Meanwhile the whole
764 neighborhood gathers, and the weeping and sobbing increase. Some women closely related to the deceased begin to beat themselves, striking their heads against something or other; the others try to soothe and quiet them. But all these admonitions frequently have no effect on the frenzied mourners, who, as a result of the blows they have inflicted upon their own heads and bodies and of beating their heads against something, fall down as if dead. When quiet finally prevails, the funeral ceremony is arranged. The next of kin sew themselves mourning apparel,
[203] and messengers are sent out with notices and invitations to the relatives, foster parents, friends, and acquaintances of the deceased; his fellow villagers on the other hand are obliged

/27 cont./

764 [203] to come to the mourning ceremony without being invited. The deceased is put in a coffin. The women in mourning apparel, barefooted, their dresses torn, bloody scratches on their faces, and their hair loose, arrange themselves behind the coffin. From the other side the male and female mourners approach the coffin. The arrangement of the lamentations is as follows. Let us suppose that four or five women are coming to bewail the deceased. As soon as they enter the yard, they immediately start weeping and shouting "avav," and at the same time they put their fingers to their temples and continue to scratch their faces with them down to the chin until they have finished their "avav." The women sitting by the coffin answer their "avav" with the same exclamation. The mourners slowly approach the house. Their wails and sobs gradually become louder; finally they enter the house, where the real communal mourning takes place. The mourners enter the house, beating their foreheads and breasts; they kneel down before the coffin and thus bewail the deceased.

In another part of the house the belongings of the deceased are put on display, his clothes and his weapons. After the mourning of the deceased, weeping and sobbing are done over his belongings also.

Sympathy for the relatives of the deceased is expressed by [195] visitors in the following manner: "Had this but not happened to you; had you but heard of my death instead, etc."

764 608 /28/ The foster mother of the deceased or her children, when they come to bewail the ward, break out in wails and cries even a verst from the house. In the yard they are met by people who have been stationed there for this purpose and who lead them by the hand into the house. This does not prevent the new arrivals from scratching their cheeks and necks on the way until they bleed, nor from beating their heads against the house-posts until they fall down before the coffin half-dead and with tears flowing. The foster father and his children likewise beat their heads and faces.

764 [1065] On the day of the funeral, lamentation for the deceased is general. Then, after the mourning, a funeral repast is arranged and all the guests are treated to bread, wine, and lenten fare, and by evening the deceased is buried.

/28 cont./

766 It is necessary to point out one more characteristic feature. When the head of a family dies and the sad procession has just started out for the burial-ground with his remains, a rope is thrown over his house; the ends are held by two people who pull it first one way and then the other. The meaning of this curious custom, which is also widespread in Mingrelia, is the following: with the death of the head of a family and the removal of his body to the burial-ground, the house begins to shake and threatens to collapse, and in order to avert this they have recourse to the rope. After the body has been carried out and the house remains undamaged, a rifle is fired as a sign of joy.

764 Graves for men are dug waist-deep, for women still deeper, [562] because in the opinion of certain Abkhaz, women in general are sly and cunning (paivan), and the Abkhaz proverb says, "Don't [539] tell your wife what is on your mind or she will crawl out even from her grave and divulge your secret." Therefore a deceased woman is buried deeper and covered with more earth.

When the deceased has been placed in the grave, it is rimmed with wooden boards and earth is poured in from above.

The Abkhaz do not have special burial-grounds. Each family has its own burial-ground. More often, high and mountainous places near a common road serve as burial-grounds. The tourist or traveler will easily observe that in Abkhazia the best and most poetic spots are occupied by graveyards.

765 The attention paid to the deceased continues long after his burial. The mother and the wife of the departed, his foster mother or her daughters, dressed in mourning and barefoot, visit the fresh grave every day, morning and evening, and bitterly bewail the deceased /29/ and beg him to assist them in various daily troubles, to intercede for them with other deceased persons, to give them their regards, etc. This continues up to 40 days or until the "Saturday mourning banquet." Until this time, the belongings of the deceased are displayed in the house and mourners as they arrive first weep over these belongings and then also over the grave. Likewise until this time, and often for the duration of a full year, a portion for the deceased is placed on

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [795] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes marula (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pistol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both [302] sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [262] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few

/29 cont./

[765] rams, and, in general, whatever they can afford; furthermore
[262] they bring various sweetmeats prepared with butter and with honey, and also matsoni (sour /30/ milk), etc. One person in the procession holds in his hand a branching, tree-like candle, to which is fastened a strip of calico, green in color and soaked in wax. At the ends of the larger and smaller branches similar strips are hung, which are stirred by the wind like the leaves of a tree. (If the procession takes place at night, a few lighted candles are fastened to the branching candle as well as to the horns of bulls). Slowly the sad procession approaches the house and enters the yard, where it is met by the others. Here there is wailing and lamentation by the men and women separately.
[782] After this the bulls and rams are killed, each with the words, "It is offered to your soul."

The next day, i.e., on the day of the aphskhuvra, a great number of people gather. By noon one of the relatives of the deceased unties his horse and stands in the middle of a meadow, while the men and women form a circle around him. Then the horse is led around the circle three times, with the deceased's next of kin following behind, barefoot, bare-headed, in mourning attire, and weeping bitterly. The men beat their breasts and faces. The women stand in a circle divided into two groups alternately crying "avav." This ceremony ends with the horse being led out of the circle. From this time on, all earthly signs (remains) of the deceased are considered to have been destroyed; up to this time the deceased has been considered to be invisibly present in the gathering.

After this the guests seat themselves at a dinner. On the meadow, under the open sky, a long tablecloth has been spread out for them and various dishes have been prepared. Particularly
[262] noteworthy are spoons, cups, glasses, thimbles, etc. made out of cheese. The candles described above are placed there, too.

It must be noted that even though this banquet involves great expense, it is not burdensome to the hosts, since the expenses are shared, not only by the relatives, but also by the whole village where such a funeral repast is held.

/30 cont./

765
526 After the meal, the dzhiriti takes place, reminiscent of the tournaments of the Middle Ages. Now the fair sex occupies the passageway near the house. Young men on horseback assemble in front of the beauties and vie with each other in attempts to display their wit, inventiveness, and knowledge in speeches, and their bravery in the dzhigitovka /trick-riding/ which will follow.

The main dzhigitovka, tarchei /see foreign text/, consists of the following. One of the competing riders accepts from the host of the feast /31/ or from one of the beauties some strips of chintz, a small sewn boot, a rosary of chestnuts, or something else, and, holding this tarchei in his hand, he gallops ahead with it while the other lads pursue him and try to catch him and take away the tarchei. If someone is successful in this, the tarchei passes into the hands of the one who has taken it away from the first rider; then that one races off, and the others again chase after him. The one who escapes capture and manages to bring the tarchei back to the place where the competition started is the winner. The horsemen's competition does not end with this, however; they continue to prance around on horseback, pick up money from the ground at full gallop, etc.

765
541 Sometimes there are also horse-races at the mourning banquet. Children of eight to nine years of age are horsemen. A goal is pointed out to the competitors, and the first one to reach it wins something. In this case, the hosts present the winners with the horse of the deceased, with some animal, or with a khak (arshin or span) of chintz.

VI.

Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz

771 "Up to the year 1867," wrote Mr. A. in his excellent article on the Abkhaz, "the religious situation among the Abkhaz was absurd in the extreme. One found there the rites of all religious doctrines, from fetishism to Christianity. These people had no precise conception of any religion, but adopted from all of them

/31 cont./

771 whatever stood out most sharply and acted most strongly upon their almost childish imagination" (1). Madame Giorgidze says: "At

1. See Sborn. sved. o kavk. gorts., No. V.

present the majority of the Abkhaz profess the Christian religion, the minority Mohammedan. In spite of this, the Abkhaz is little informed in either of the two religions and is really a heathen rather than Christian or Moslem" (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888.

1.

775 766 The Souls of the Dead -- Their Wanderings on Earth

The Abkhaz believes that human life does not end with earthly existence, but that it continues after death, /32/ or, in the words of the Abkhaz, "on the other side." He believes, in addition, that this life beyond the grave continues at the very place where the deceased is buried. It is not enough, therefore, to take a drowned body out of the river to bury it, for the soul of the deceased must also be evoked from the water and brought into the grave in which the body of the drowned man is buried. This is the ceremony of the evocation and capture of a drowned person's soul. Men and women gather on both sides of the river from which the corpse of the drowned man has been recovered. Across the river, from one bank to the other, a silk thread is stretched, from which a leather knapsack is hung, its lower end almost touching the water. The men and women then begin to the sound of the balalaika. The Abkhaz is convinced that the soul of the dead leaves the water and enters the knapsack when it hears the sounds of the balalaika and the singing. When the Abkhaz think that the soul has entered the bag, one of the men jumps into the water and ties it up. They then carry the

[534] [533]

/32 cont./

knapsack with great rejoicing to the burial-ground, where, through a hole drilled in the knapsack, the captured soul passes into the grave of the one who drowned.

In Abkhazia the dead are highly honored. The burial-grounds, as we have said, lie on high, picturesque places and are surrounded by fences. Shingled houses of a kind the Abkhaz do not make for themselves are built over the graves. Near the graves various fruit trees are planted -- apple, pear, peach, quince, etc. On the graves themselves the Abkhaz lay slices of melons, watermelons, cucumbers, etc. All this serves to confirm the belief that beyond the grave the souls of the dead require food, drink, lodging, etc., just like the living.

And in fact the Abkhaz do believe that the dead will enjoy, for example, the piece of melon placed on the grave. Because of this belief, for almost a full year after a death, a special share of each meal is laid on the table for the deceased, and banquets are held in his memory, etc. Besides this, annual funeral-feasts are held on the eve of the paternal Saturday for those recently deceased, and on the paternal Saturday itself funeral-feasts are held for those deceased longer. At the slaughter of the sacrificial animal, the head of the family says, "If there is a life beyond the grave, here is this (offering) to your soul." Then as food is prepared and placed on the tablecloth, the head of the family stands in front of the tablecloth and again says, "Deceased ones /33/, grant us the blessing of your souls! Do not harm us by death (mortification)! Make us and our cattle increase (multiply)! etc. At the conclusion of this invocation, he makes the sign of the cross in the air over the tablecloth with an iron spit and says, "All this, prepared by the power of fire and water, is sacrificed to your souls, if indeed there be a life beyond the grave." Having said this, the head of the family takes a glass of wine and drinks it; after this he puts pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificed animal into a slice of gomi, pours a little wine over it, and throws it into the yard, saying: "And this is for you, guiding and escorting souls." From this we perceive that in Abkhaz belief the living relatives of the dead

/33 cont./

775 769 are visited by the souls of the deceased, together with other souls accompanying them. The Abkhaz believes that the more magnificently they (souls of the deceased)are met and treated, the more satisfied and generous they will be and the more co-operation and patronage they will give the living -- in the opposite situation, they would only harm the living. Those souls satisfied with their reception, upon their return to the souls of other deceased relatives, express their joy and praise the esteem paid them; unsatisfied souls, however, return extremely irritated and, when asked by the other souls about their reception, answer, "What could we have found there, if they themselves turn out to be just such dead ones as we?" The Abkhaz believe that in this case the unsatisfied souls' most terrible anger will fall on several members of the family that has thus failed to receive their relatives' souls in a proper manner.

The Abkhaz believe firmly that the souls of the deceased leave their graves and visit their living kin. They stand near [782] their houses and whistle; they are placated by the pouring of wine or the throwing out of something. These souls of the dead like to leave their graves, particularly at night; they stand near the road and when they see a traveler they run after him in pursuit. Let us hear how the Abkhaz themselves report the significance of funeral banquets:

1. "Sesrkva was a well-known and brave man. During one raid, he lost his hundred companions in a skirmish; they were all killed. Sesrkva slaughtered a large number of bulls and rams and arranged a funeral banquet for his companions. Afterwards he himself was /34/ killed in a skirmish and buried none knew where. A friend of his expressed the wish to find Sesrkva's grave in order to mourn for him. After a lengthy search he at last found it and mourned Sesrkva, and because his village was far away and the hour late, he decided to spend the night right there. Having tied his horse to a tree, he lay down under an oak and soon fell asleep. He then dreamed that Sesrkva's hundred lads were in an excellent position in the other world; they were satisfied with everything, for they treated their guests honorably and fed their horses well. But Sesrkva himself and his horse

/34 cont./

775 were wandering about hungry, feeding only upon the charity of the
769 hundred men. Having seen Sesrkva the hero in such a state, his friend asked him, Sesrkva! You surpassed everyone in the wide world. What has befallen you in the life beyond the grave that you are unable to receive even one guest? Sesrkva answered, How then can I receive guests, when I must beg for myself and my horse? When he awakened, his friend realized that no funeral banquet had been held for Sesrkva, so he immediately arranged a rich funeral-banquet for him. Once more he had a dream: Sesrkva was now in as good a condition as his hundred companions and was able to receive guests."

2. "Two persons were walking along; one of them had a fat goat, skinned and cut up, hidden in a sack. In the evening someone began to pursue them, whistling as he ran. The man with the load said to him, Leave me alone! What do you want of me? Having said this, he went his way, but the ghost followed him. His companion guessed what was the matter and advised the friend to cut off a piece of meat to throw to the ghost. The advice was taken and the piece of meat thrown -- the whistling and the pursuit stopped immediately."

3. "The people of Mokvi every year arranged their funeral banquets for the dead, who were buried in the upper part of the burial-ground, while the people of Morkvuli did not do this for the dead buried in the lower part of the burial-ground. Therefore the Mokvi dead mocked the Morkvuli dead; 'You who find nothing!' The others responded to this: 'When our kinsmen find something for themselves, we shall get something, too.' The dead gathered together at night and held dances on the aphstsa r kvashartha (place for the dances of the dead). Everybody could see the footprints of the dancing souls."

794 /35/ The souls of the dead as well as those of the living,
795 and in particular those of the witches, are capable from time
754 to time of wandering about with evil intentions, as sucking milk from nipples, drawing out the heart and liver, etc. Even the water element will not accept witches, and they do not drown in water. They have their own chief, Roskipi, who dwells

/35 cont./

upon the summit of the mountain Tabakona. They are divided into groups according to their degree of power: the younger ones usually travel upon mice, frogs, cats, etc., the older ones on foxes, wolves, etc. On Assumption Eve they are all obliged to gather upon the Tabakona for the annual report of their deeds to their sovereign, Roskipi, and to produce material proof of their industrious service -- a heart taken from a man or animal, a liver, eyes, nails, hair, etc. To avoid attack from witches, the Abkhaz take the following measures: during the fast of the Assumption they erect crosses and stick candles in their hair, and on the eve of the Assumption they shoot off rifles, sing, and spend the whole night in vigil. The Abkhaz believes that a witch can simultaneously be at home, among people, and on top of the mountain Tabakona. The Abkhaz explain such a splitting-up of a person by saying that it is not the witch herself that wanders about, but her accessory soul (aphschchda = superfluous soul).

2.

ooo

The True God -- Paganism -- The Principal and Secondary Gods of the Abkhaz -- Causes of Polytheism -- "Creators" and "Forgers" -- Fate or Predestination.

To assist the supreme-being, endowed with all the qualities with which, according to our understanding, God is endowed, says Mr. A., Abkhaz mythology added a number of other deities, assigning to each his particular designation. These assisting deities, according to their understanding, were created by the Almighty before man and the universe came into being, and people at prayer appeal through them to God himself. God himself never descends to earth, but if he needs to punish someone or to grant someone his grace, he sends out one of his assistants. In the prayers which are said and sung at sacrifices and other

/35 cont./

776 religious ceremonies, the Abkhaz addresses God thus: Akhdau
[782] (or antsa-daukva) /36/ zlypkha-khkhaura, which means "Great God, merciful one, gracious one."

Besides this merciful god, the Abkhaz, as we have said, have other secondary gods, whose creation was necessitated by the people's needs. Every atmospheric phenomenon, every danger threatening a man or his property, every type of toil assuring the existence of man created in the childish imaginations of these people separate, invisible protectors, ruling over all. These deities have no images, since they appear in different forms according to the circumstances; nevertheless, according to the understanding of the Abkhaz, not to be doubted, for it is felt in all the good and evil that can happen in the life of a person. Every step of a man is under their control and every departure from the true way immediately evokes punishment by them.

174 As science has proved by a multitude of analogous examples
776 from other primitive peoples, there can be no doubt that nature and its phenomena have played an enormous role in the development of the religious ideas and theistic images of the Abkhaz people. Their childlike mentality and imagination were undoubtedly strongly influenced by the azure sky, resting like an immense vault upon the earth, now threateningly and severely looking down from behind the clouds, now smiling with its fiery eyes, the sun by day and the moon and the stars by night. Mother Earth herself also exerted her influence upon them, for she is indeed mother, nurse, provider, and source of blessings and abundance; nor did the sun, the "eye of heaven," giving warmth and life to the whole world, remain without influence on their childlike imaginations, nor the moon, the "guard of night," which quietly floats on the vault of the sky and conquers the darkness of night; the threatening thunder bolt, instilling terror and destroying everything in its way; the air, now quiet and friendly and still, now threateningly perturbed and howling; the colorful, beautiful rainbow, this "belt" of the sky; the dawn, that "gate of Day"... All this and much else, of course, greatly

/35 cont./

776 [194] affected man in his infant stage; no wonder the Abkhaz personifies and deifies all these, together with trees, woods, fields, etc.; he deifies some things because they bring him help, others because they do him harm. Accordingly, Abkhaz mythology created special protective deities for every activity /37/ of man, whether agriculture, industry, art, or herding. Some of these are, for instance: Aithar, the protector of cattle; Dzhadzha, god of sowing; Shasha, god of the smithy, and others. Many of these deities are female; for instance, the protector of the element of water, "mother of the water," is a woman; the earth itself is personified as a woman; there is also a "lady-wind"; the ancestor of cattle is female, as is the ancestor of nanny-goats; the god of sowing, Dzhadzha, and others are also female.

777 776 [194] Besides these deities, there are the Ashatsa-chaphatsa, the "creator" and "forger" gods. There are either two of them, or many. Under the influence of Christianity, they are presented in the form of angels. "Every soul" is born through Ashatsa-chaphatsa. They determine the future of the newborn child, his happiness and unhappiness, the length of his life and the hour of his death, and they make an inscription on his forehead (lakhints'ara /see foreign text/) concerning all this. The Abkhaz is certain that these inscriptions on the forehead exist and believes that anyone can confirm it with his own eyes. Incidentally, let us tell an Abkhaz tale that illustrates the inevitability of predestination or fate.

777 776 539 In the night two men set out to steal. On the way they were caught in a heavy rainstorm. They took refuge under the porch of a peasant's hut. Peeping in, they saw a group of women gathered, among them a woman in labor, who shortly afterwards gave birth to a girl. The "creators" and "forgers" did not hesitate to appear. One of them said, "The newborn girl shall become the wife of one of the thieves outside that are looking in. This shall be his fate." The second of the "creators" and "forgers" confirmed the words of the first. The thief, already middle-aged, said on hearing this, "I am not young even now, and she has just

/37 cont./

777 been born; God save me from such a marriage." And so he
776 planned to kill the newborn baby; when everyone in the
539 house had fallen asleep, he slipped quietly in, carried the child out, ripped open her belly, and threw it upon the flat roof of the hut. Then the two thieves went on their way. The child's wailing awakened the women, who found her, sewed up the wound with silk thread, and thus saved her from death. And no matter how hard the thief about whom the above-mentioned prophecy was made tried to find a wife, he was /38/ unsuccessful. Meanwhile the girl who he thought was dead reached marriageable age and one day somehow met the thief. He immediately fell in love with her and married her. Then it was shown how inevitably every predestination and decision made by the "creator-forgers" is fulfilled.

VII.

Prayers in Honor of the Deities

782 Prayer is the name given to those religious ceremonies and rites accompanied by sacrifices in honor of the gods which are performed according to a definite pattern set and sanctified from olden times.

[776] Each deity may independently show, within his sphere of activity, grace or wrath toward man; for instance, he may send sickness or misfortune on him or his cattle, etc.
[787] The Abkhaz easily determine by special signs whether the deities' anger is the result of deviations from the fixed pattern
[688] of the religious rites. To avert the wrath of the gods caused by omissions in prayers and sacrifices, they must repeat the offerings and complete whatever was omitted the first time; uncorrected omissions and mistakes in ritual weigh heavily as guilt felt toward the angry gods, even upon generations
[755] far removed from the sinners. If anyone falls ill in conse-
[753] quence of neglect in ritual toward one or another god, he must offer him a sacrifice in order to recover. If he is

/38 cont./

782 unable to perform that act because of his sickness, he then
755 presents something as a pledge, saying, "If you (God) are
753 sending this (sickness) because of my guilt, then relieve me; I shall pray to you as is fitting and as the sorcerer will instruct me." But when he does not know which deity is angry and is causing his sickness, he says, "No matter what caused this illness, I shall do whatever the sorcerers may recommend." The pledge is specially set aside as a sacred object until his vow is fulfilled. The performers of prayers during such religious rituals are men or women, depending upon the sex of the deity in whose honor the ceremony is performed.

I shall proceed to a description of the ceremonies themselves.

1.

/39/

782 The Ceremony in Honor of Mother Earth
755

A sinless woman, taking six nuts and a few grains of millet, leads the sick one to an alder tree. Here she carries the three nuts and several grains of millet around the tree in the name of the earth; then she does the same thing around a nut-tree (walnut) in the name of Adabna, begging him to have pity on the sick person. She then makes
[532] a richly-dressed doll in the image of a man, buries it in
[789] the earth for the "liberation" of the sick person, and says, "Play and amuse yourself with this instead of with the sick one." After this, a large millet-loaf is baked -- "the bread of Mother Earth" -- and two other long loaves of bread for Adabna. The same woman takes a piece from each of the four sides of the first loaf, both the loaves in honor of Adabna, a candle, and incense, and with the sick person goes to the crossing of three roads, where she places the pieces of the millet-loaf at one road, the two loaves of Adabna at the second, and at the third she lights the candles and places chevyaki (shoes) there, saying; "Mistress Earth, these are your shoes!" She then places the sick person on his knees

/39 cont./

782 among the articles so laid out, with a "chikila" (a kind of
755 veil) on his head, and begs, "Adgil-ankhu, Atula-ankhuse, grant him your favor! Give him firmness of head, heart, and body! Give him color, skin, and bone! Give him back the will to speak and to work! Give him strength! Deliver him from evil," etc. In the same way she also prays to Adabna. After this, she removes the chikila from the sick person with a nut-twig, raises him, strikes him on the back with a whip, and says, "Go, from this day I grant you freedom (azati)," and then both go home. At home a loaf of millet-bread is broken in two; two women each take a half and stand on the two sides of the hearth opposite each other; the sick person passes three times between them under the loaf, while one of the women exclaims, "Give me the one who has assumed the Hebrew belief," and the other, "Give me the convert to Christianity."

753 The Abkhaz is convinced that the invisible being that
755 settled in the sick man hastens immediately upon leaving him to enter someone else, and so, to help him find a new victim, they pray to him at the crossroads, where there is a continuous /40/ traffic of people, and, subsequently, a victim is always found it is unnecessary to search very long. And since an illness can be caught from a spot where a person accidentally fell or sat down, the rite of appeasing the
[823] earth must be performed on the very same spot of the falling or sitting from which the sickness originated; the doll must be buried on exactly the same spot. This is why, in order not to catch something evil from the spot where he sat down,
[789] the Abkhaz spits three times on getting up and says, "Here stood the house and courtyard of my grandfather!"

2.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Water

782 When someone is ill for a long time with a fever, a
755 female fortune-teller is asked for advice and help; she usually
791

/40 cont./

782 prescribes a prayer to the water, which is thought to be the
755 cause of the illness. Since the protectress of the waters,
[791] the "Mother of Water," is a woman, a sinless old woman is invited to the ceremony.

776 A large, clear, inaccessible fresh-water lake is thought
[778] to be the residence of the "Mother of Water"; she may also dwell in a pure spring, untouched by anything unclean, such as a pig, etc. The "Mother of Water" sometimes comes out of her dwelling to the shore, and at that time anyone may see her. This is how the Abkhaz describe this "Mother of Water." She is a most beautiful, bewitching woman; her locks are incomparable and chestnut in color; her eyes are laughing. The Abkhaz who has been bewitched by her talks
753 to his comrades thus: "Eh, brothers, I have been vanquished
776 by the 'Mother of the Water,' and from now on I no longer
539 belong to your society. Recently I rode into a dense forest and saw a table spread there under a big oak; a mirror and a lighted candle stood nearby; the 'Mother of the Water' was sitting in front of the mirror, smiling at her own beauty and combing her long hair, which reached the ground. My arms fell to my sides from exhaustion; I could not take my eyes from that wonderful vision. When she saw me, she quickly arranged her hair and came towards me. I felt giddy... Without a word she raised all ten fingers, asking me, 'Are you willing to be my husband for ten years or not?' I shook my head, but she would not stop, and with the proper number of fingers raised, she offered me in turn nine, eight, seven years, and so on /41/ of marriage. As I kept on refusing, she finally raised her last little finger and fixed her gaze upon me. I immediately gave my consent..." (1).

1. "Etnograf, pis'ma iz Abkhazii /Ethnographical letters from Abkhazia/," Konst. Machavariani, Droeba, 1884-1885.

755
782 The "pure" old woman who was invited to the ceremony,

/41 cont./

755 782 unnoticed by the occupants of the house of the sick, takes some object belonging to the sick person, e.g., a dress, etc., and goes to the river. Standing on the bank, she says, "Mother of the Water, mistress, if the sick person was bound by you, unbind him"; she then touches the water three times with the object belonging to the sick person and scoops up a few drops of it with alder leaves, which she carefully carries home, where she fastens them to the ceiling above the hearth, convinced that the fever will then disappear like the water in the leaves; then she runs out of the house with the words, "May your sickness also run away like this."

[756] If the sick person feels relief after this, a praying-woman is invited in, a hen and a rooster are prepared with a stuffed loaf of unleavened bread, and three candles are molded, which are distributed in the following manner: the hen and one candle are allotted to the "Mother of the Water," the rooster and the second candle to her husband, and the third candle to their maid-servant, called Abzahav-Abzachav (benefactress). The sick person goes to the water with the praying-woman and kneels down. The praying-woman takes a candle, lights it and places it near the water, and addresses a prayer for the relief of the sick person to the "Mother of the Water" -- dzdzlan dzahvvazh khiphsha gvasha ("Mother of the Water," "mistress of the water," Khiphsha Gvasha); she lights another candle and makes the same request of the "lord husband" of the "Mother of the Water, finally she sets in place the third lighted candle and begs the maid-servant to serve as intercessor and mediator for the afflicted one with her "masters." Then she passes her hand over the sick person's back and gives him "azati" (liberty) from his ailment.

782 585 844 A similar ceremony is performed for the young bride on the occasion when she is for the first time "led out to the water" (i.e., taken to fetch water); it is also performed for a woman in labor so that she may have plentiful milk. In this case, if the ceremony cannot be performed in full, an egg for the "Mother of the Water" is thrown into the water during the prayer.

/41 cont./

515 782 823 [783] Fearing to defile it, the Abkhaz avoids bathing in running water; if he bathes, upon coming out /42/ of the water he takes three stones and says, "I sinned against you today; I went into the water and bathed, but you, forgive me." With this prayer, he passes the pebbles around his head with his hands and throws them into the water.

3.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Rainbow

753 [755] [782] The ceremony in honor of the rainbow, which is not obligatory for all, is performed for the greater part on persons whose sickness, according to the female fortune-teller, is caused by the rainbow. A prolonged yellowness of the face, a weakening of the organism, instability of character -- the [821] Abkhaz attributes all these to the fact that the sick person entered water at the very moment when the rainbow was drinking from it.

755 782 "Sinless" old women, having planned a sacrifice and promised a prayer, lead the sick person out to a brook; they take with them two fried capons, two stuffed loaves of unleavened bread in the shape of a tongue, and other provisions, as in the performance of the ceremony in honor of the water. On both sides of the brook, clean objects are laid out, such as clothes, silver, etc., a little bridge made of thread is thrown over the river from one bank to another. Having prepared all this, the praying-woman, with a doll that has been prepared beforehand in her hands, walks around the sick person, who is kneeling down covered with a piece of calico, and prays for him to the rainbow, known by the name Eliaphshi; then she takes a candle and addresses a similar prayer to the "Mistress Mother of the Water," and her "lord husband." After praying over the provisions she takes some [789] of each dish and throws it into the water; she places the doll in a pumpkin, and, after adorning the latter with lighted

/42 cont./

755 candles, she lets it float down the stream, saying, "Amuse
782 yourself with this one, instead of the sick person." Finally
[789] the old praying-woman passes her hand over the sick person's back, raises him, and having given him liberty ("azati") from his ailment, she sends him home, instructing him not to look around on his way back. The food brought to the stream is eaten on the spot by the participants in the ceremony; the remains from the table are thrown into the water and the dishes washed clean.

This prayer-ritual is considered the most sacred of all in Abkhazia, and the name of the rainbow, Atsaqva, is pronounced with great reverence. The Abkhaz claims that as
[821] a consequence of this ceremony in the rainbow's honor the rain appears.

4.

/43/

782 The Prayer-Ceremony in Honor of the Wind (Phsharnha)

A large loaf of bread with cheese is prepared, placed in a basket, and carried some distance from the house. Here
[776] a prayer is said to "Lady Wind" (a deity of female sex), in
[821] which she is asked to bring good and to carry off evil and to
[777] deliver them from all sorts of misfortunes, etc. Then the middle part of the loaf is cut out, carried into the forest, and hung on an oak tree near the top. The next day, the one who first comes near the oak tree feasts on this offering.

5.

A Prayer in Honor of a Tree

782 On Assumption Day, vitushki are baked according to
824 the number of men in the family; then the master of the house, with his household, approaches any kind of young tree and, putting his foot on it, prays, "Tree, give me your blessing and happiness ... that I may safely come down

/43 cont./
782 from the treetop. May the fresh twig, when I step on it with
824 my foot, first grow stronger and then, being strengthened, grow fresh (soft), etc."

6.

782 A Prayer in Honor of Adnqa or (the same thing) "the
755 Outer Ones"

[775] The souls of the dead, the "outer ones," are often the
[753] cause of sickness in man and his cattle. They often become angry, and the outward signs of such anger are frequent yawning, sleepiness, and general exhaustion visited upon the culprit. If the one afflicted does not satisfy the angered "outer ones" with offerings and prayers, an inevitable death awaits him. On one of the Saturdays a meal is prepared of young rams' meat, chicken, sour milk, and the meat of a cow, if the soul of a woman is angered, and all these provisions are laid out on a tablecloth under the eaves, on both sides of which are placed a dress and valuable /44/ objects.

The sick man or woman is placed in the middle of a circle and either a man or a woman, according to the sex of the sick person, prays and begs the living and the dead (Angi-phsngis) to have mercy upon the sick and to grant him health and to accept the food prepared for them. The person pronouncing the prayer for the sick one then passes his hand over the back of the sick person and gives him freedom from his sickness ("azati"). If the ailment is thought to be caused by the soul of a prince or of some other personage of
[825] high rank, a tethered horse is untied and released in a field at the concluding words of the prayer: "This (horse) is for your soul." According to Abkhaz belief, such a horse soon swells up and dies.

/44 cont./

7.

782
585
[776] The Prayer Ceremony in Honor of Azhahara

The Abkhaz call the protector or genius of the house and hearth by the name Azhahara in whose honor is performed the ceremony for a young married couple in the stage of their marriage before they have appeared together before their elders and the young woman is for the first time led into her husband's main house, or when the bride is invited into her father's house. One of the oldest members of the family sticks pieces of the heart and liver of a sacrificial animal on a spit and begs Azhahara to protect the young couple at home and out of doors.

8.

Alishkantra

782
231
[776] Alishkantra is the "mistress" of dogs. In the opinion of the Abkhaz, the owner of good dogs will also be fortunate in the multiplication of his cattle; good fortune in dogs is associated with good fortune in all domestic animals. Therefore before praying to other god-protectors of domestic and wild animals, the Abkhaz prays to Alishkantra to grant him luck with good dogs and the opportunity to raise and breed them.

9.

/45/ A Prayer in Honor of Zhabran

[776]
[796
262] Zhabran is the protector of animals. Every Abkhaz owning cattle performs the prayer-ceremony in his honor on "Cheese Saturday." For this they prepare suluguni (a big cheese) called "sacred cheese"; bread dough is placed on the hearth, in which a man puts a core of suluguni, whereupon he prays, "Prefer me to all those pronouncing your name;

/45 cont./

782 make my cattle multiply; make them increase to such an
231 extent that in the future I may pray to you and offer you a cheese as big as this loaf of bread and my courtyard will have no room for all my cattle. Preserve my cattle from all trouble and misfortunes both at home and outside; grant that my cattle will lose only old hair and dung; grant that my herd will be so large that an animal walking in the rear will be unable to overtake one running in the front; may the calves play like young bears and shine like young stallions. This I ask of you." Then the person praying puts three walnut branches in the bread dough and, striking against the ceiling, exclaims, "Voots! chiphsh!" (a call to summon cattle). The same ceremony is performed on the Thursday of "Cheese-
[796] week" in honor of the protector of goats; it is called Dzhabran.

10.

A Prayer in Honor of Aithar

[796] Aithar is the protector of domestic cattle and the
[796] farm economy. The prayers to him are held on a Saturday, except during Lent, because offerings to him must consist of milk products, and among the rich the offering is a milk-fed calf. The customary dish at this time is a thin gruel made with the milk of a cow that has recently calved. The shepherds stand around a kettle or pot filled with gruel; the oldest of them, holding a wax candle, pronounces a prayer: "Aithar, grant me superiority above all those who pronounce your name." He then begs Aithar to increase his herds and to protect them from beasts of prey. Upon concluding /46/ the prayer, the shepherd throws three spoonfuls of gruel into a brazier with coals standing nearby, and the participants eat the rest. If the inhabitants of the whole village or a part of it perform the ceremony in honor of Aithar, then a calf is sacrificed, which is slaughtered by the most respected old man, who first pronounces a prayer. After the meat of the calf has been cooked or roasted, the same old man

/46 cont./

782 231 pronounces a prayer the second time, cutting off pieces from different parts of the animal and offering them to Aithar by throwing them on the red-hot coals.

11.

Azhvephshaa (Abn-intsvakhu)

782 224 776 796 Azhvephshaa is the god of the forests and wild animals. Hunters sacrifice to him before setting out on a hunt, usually the middle or at the end of December. For the sacrifice, they jointly buy a ram or a goat. When it is roasted, the oldest huntsman prays to Azhvephshaa to send success for their undertaking; at the conclusion of the prayers, he throws small pieces of roasted meat and a piece of incense on the coals. Each of the remaining hunters repeats the prayer in turn, adding his own wishes and indicating the particular animal he would like to kill, while throwing pieces of incense on the coals.

12.

Dzhadzha and Anaphanga

787 24 776 796 Dzhadzha is the patroness of the crops. Prayers to her are offered twice a year: in March, at the beginning of spring, and in November, after the maize has been stored. Praying to Dzhadzha is not accompanied by any special solemnity; it is performed quietly by each individual family. Rich landowners sometimes invite their former dependents to the prayer, particularly those who have taken part in the sowing and reaping of their crops. On the day set aside for prayer, dishes made exclusively of grain and fruits grown by the master of the house are prepared. After the food has been placed on the table, the oldest member of the family /47/ addresses a prayer to Dzhadzha, thanking him for the good harvest or begging him to send everything in abundance. For the spring prayer to Dzhadzha, all the dishes prepared are lenten.

/47 cont./

[782 241 776] The Abkhaz asks of Anaphanga, the goddess of crops: "Wherever I draw my furrow and strike with iron and with implement, may an abundance of grain be granted me; grant happiness to the sower and to the consumer." During reaping, when the sheaves are first brought home, the Abkhaz prays in honor of Anaphanga; during the fast of Assumption, however, a cross is made of the ears; kernels of maize and beans are fastened to a candle to avert possible harm by evil spirits, e.g., by Dzhadzha herself. This [776] Dzhadzha is an ugly goddess, short and fat; when she comes into a field she exclaims, "Natsvis, natsvis" (little finger! little finger!), i.e., the wish that the maize in that field grow no higher than a little finger, but if one pursues Dzhadzha with the words, "Raki dzaki, raki dzaki" ("cubit-span, cubit-span"), she leaves the field and her wish does not come true.

[243] Before the threshing of the gomi /millet/ the Abkhaz pray to the great goddesses to keep the whole family in good health and to permit the whole household in future, and at the head the lady of the house herself, to gather at the beater for the threshing of the gomi (satsekhveli).

13.

A Prayer for the Bees

[782 231] The Abkhaz bake a round loaf of bread with cheese, take it to the bee-garden, and pray to Ananagunda for the preservation of their bees; upon returning home, they break the loaf and eat it without looking at one another, for which some stand facing one door, some another.

14.

Prayer to the Sun and the Moon

[782 821] The Abkhaz addresses the sun with the following prayer: "Sunlight, withhold not your benevolence from us, warmth

/47 cont./

782 and light, well-being and success in everything; grant
821 beauty, charm, and elegance to our maidens so that, like you, they may shine, glitter, and warm people." In the prayer to the moon, they express the wish that the children should become like it in brilliance.

/48/ 15.

Prayer to Khphath and Khvnash

782 This prayer is offered on the Saturday of the week of
[796] Thomas, with cheese, bread, wine, candles, etc. brought as offerings. The aim is to solicit health and prosperity for the family. On one of the following Saturdays a similar prayer is addressed to Khvnash. Khphath and Mdzhath are
[551] men's names in Abkhazia.

16.

"Ananaha"

782 Anan means "mother." The oldest woman of the
796 household places some money on a loaf of bread (Anan l phara = money of Anan) and goes into the kitchen-garden where she places three cucumber-leaves on the loaf of bread and the same number on her own head. She then fastens a lighted candle to a cucumber stalk and, holding incense in her hands, prays, "Mothers and creators, do not let me have grief from my sons: do not cast me into sorrow because of them, but let me see them prosper." A similar prayer is said to Ashatsanha, the god-creator or god-father. A cow and money are offered in sacrifice to him. During Lent, the village maidens also used to pray to the "Mother of the Waters" that she might grant them long and thick hair.

17.

Prayer for the Ear

753 The Abkhaz says, "ahsa r lmha i klou," which means

/48 cont./
753 "hung on the girls' ears." Rheumatic pains in the knees,
instability of character, general weakness of the organism
of a person, etc. -- all these are consequences of a
789 "weighty cause." To avert the sickness, a button is fastened
to the ear like an earring. An innocent and sinless woman
755 leads the ailing person to a nut-bush and makes him kneel;
782 she drives seven /49/ sticks of nut-wood into the ground around
him, fastens a lighted candle to each of them, and prays
[776] on behalf of the sick person to hanipha, the genius, walking
along the rocks.

18.

Prayer in Honor of the Supreme Being

776
753 This supreme being is believed to be the cause of all
kinds of sickness in man. When the body-temperature of a
seriously sick person fluctuates greatly and he is alternately
thrown into a fever and chills, when he faints or loses con-
sciousness and regains it momentarily, and then begins to
toss and become delirious, to sing songs, to mumble prayers,
etc., the Abkhaz believe that all these severe pathological
conditions are unmistakable signs of action by a superior
force, by the supreme deities (Anua r mzz) on the sick per-
son -- "there is a divine cause." The Abkhaz are convinced
that this "divine cause" has taken up its abode in the sick
person and therefore they say, Anua drthoup, i.e., "a god
755 came to visit." When the female fortune-teller confirms
[787] that the cause of the sickness is indeed that "a god took up
his abode" in the sick person, then everyone in the house
must assume a gay appearance and rejoice instead of
grieving, for "where the god has taken up his abode, there
can be nothing but rejoicing." Therefore the village youth
gathers in the house of such a patient and all begin to sing
and dance, and even the sick person is made to take part in
the dances and singing, if he is strong enough to do so.

The prayer-sacrifice is carried out near the house
[782] on the edge of a forest. The offering is a goat or a kid, a

/49 cont./

755 782 ram or a lamb, together with loaves of bread, etc. All this is taken to the place selected, and the patient himself is led there. No women are present, for they are not [562] allowed to approach this sacred place. A venerable man, holding a candle, declares, "Great god, as is proper and as the fortune-teller has prescribed, the worshiper today stands before you; he has brought sacrificial animals and loaves of bread... Have mercy upon him, be merciful to him, if he has sinned before you, forgive him. I beg you to let him go from this day forward, to leave him and free him like a loosened knot." While saying these words, the venerable man moves the candle around the patient, lights it, and places it nearby. He then /50/ takes another candle [796] and prays to Michael-Gabriel. Upon the completion of this ceremony, the sick person returns home alone, while the others sit down to a meal.

One such ceremony, however, is not considered sufficient for the send-off of so eminent a guest as a god. The [796] Abkhaz is therefore obliged to repeat the ceremony annually. One day a week is set aside as a holiday in honor of that same supreme being; this day is considered such a sacred one that the house even remains unswept, etc.

19.

Aphi

796 [821] Aphi (2) is the god and master of the thunder, lightning,

[113] 2. See Sborn. sveden. o kavk. gortsakh, No. V, Tiflis, 1871, pp. 15-16, article "Religioznyye verovaniye abkhaztsev /Religious beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A. -- where, by the way, this deity is called Afy.

[782] and all atmospheric phenomena in general. The most solemn prayers in Abkhazia are offered in honor of this god.

/50 cont./

782 733 [796] On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder-[562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

782 731 789 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre-[533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva ryshva and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also [821] during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second, to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one 782 731 574 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, reminding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

/51 cont./

782 731 574 one of those present begins to glorify the god: "Anchva dukhva zlyphkha khkhaura!" "O you who descends from heaven with lightning and ascend to heaven with thunder, who knows the number of the stars in heaven and of the sands at the bottom of the sea ..." etc., and he concludes the poem with the words, "akhdau." All those present, divided into two groups, repeat every line of the hymn in turn, always three times over.

782 821 The killing of one of the herd by lightning unfailingly evokes prayer to Aphi; on the other hand, if he is not appeased by sacrifice, a repetition of his visit must be expected. The owner of the dead animal invites the inhabitants of the village, without distinction as to age or sex. On the spot where the animal was killed, a tower is built about one and a half sagene in height, so that beasts of prey cannot climb it. All those present surround the killed animal, join hands, and dance, half of them singing "Voetla" and the other half answering "Chaupar," and they raise the animal onto the tower, still singing and dancing, and leave it there as a victim for the birds of prey. Then the owner of the animal killed by lightning sacrifices a bull to Aphi, at the same time thanking him for the present visit and begging him nonetheless to spare him future visits. Various dishes are prepared from the meat of the sacrificed animal; bread, cheese, and wine are brought, and those present feast all day long at the expense of the man who suffered the loss. The day the animal was killed by lightning becomes so memorable in the family that has thus been visited by Aphi that neither the head of the family /52/ nor his children will give anyone anything on the anniversary of that day, saying that they expect a visit from Aphi on that day.

[527] [931] [766] The same ceremony is performed when a person has been struck by lightning. During the dance around the corpse, none of the relatives of the dead man dares to weep; otherwise all the participants will be struck dead by a thunder-bolt.

/52 cont./

821 766 "Recently," writes Mr. Giorgidze in the newspaper Iveriia of 1888, "a man was being buried with laments and sobbing. At that moment two bulls grazing nearby were struck by a thunderbolt and immediately the crying and sobbing turned into dancing and singing, "Atlarchouph." The dead bulls were lifted up and placed on a tree, and the deceased was buried in a deathly silence."

The corpse of a person struck by a thunderbolt is placed in a coffin, put on a tower, and left there until nothing but his bones remain; the coffin is then taken down and buried with the normal burial ceremonies and the celebration of the funeral-banquet established by custom.

175 764 [766 821] It was probably this custom of such placing or suspending of the corpses of those killed by Aphi that led the ancient Greco-Roman writers and the geographer Vakhushti to state that in Abkhazia and Colchis dead men were not buried, but their corpses hung in trees. These are Vakhushti's words: "Though Christians by creed, the Abkhaz do not know their religion and are therefore considered to be idolaters. And indeed, instead of burying their dead, they dress them in their best clothes and weapons, lock them in boxes, and place them in trees." Apollonius Rhodius (250-200 B.C.) wrote of Colchis, "Many grapes and willows grew there, from the tops of which corpses of the dead were suspended by chains. Even now the inhabitants of Colchis consider it a crime to burn corpses of men or even to bury them and cover them with burial mounds; they are put in undressed hides of bulls and suspended from trees far from the city. But the earth as well as the air gets its own, for the corpses of women are buried in it; such is their law" (1). The same thing is

[113]

1. Greko-Rimskiie pisateli o kavkaze /Greco-Roman authors on the Caucasus/, by Gen, pt. 48.

attested in Variae Historiae: "The Colchi put their dead in hides, sew them up and hang them on trees" (2). Nymphodorus

/52 cont./

2. Ibid., p. 162.

195 764 of Syracuse (who lived about the middle of the fourth century B.C.) said /53/ that "it is not accepted among the Colchians either to bury or to burn the corpses of men. They put these corpses in fresh animal-hides and hang them on trees. They commit to the earth the corpses of women, however, ... They venerate heaven and earth above all" (1).

1. Ibid., p. 208.

20.

Shasha

326 796

Under the name of Shasha the Abkhaz understand the inventor of the craft of the smith. They say of him, "Shasha khe ah-dou," which means, "Shasha, the great lord of trades." Shasha or Shash was the first blacksmith! He picked up the red-hot iron, not with tongs, but with his hands, and he forged it, not on an anvil, but on his knees. He is the inventor not only of the craft of the smith, but the inventor-patron of 363 other crafts as well. The smithy with all its appurtenances is the image of Shasha (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888, No. 186.

[782] [796] [414] Prayers are offered up to him on New Year's Eve, and the most complete of the ceremonies to him is held by the blacksmiths and the locksmiths.

782 326 On New Year's Eve the master of the house kills either a calf or a ram, and his wife kills a rooster for each member of the family and prepares a pie of wheat-flour and fresh cheese. The livers and hearts of all the slaughtered animals are roasted separately; for this, instead of a spit, a stick from a young nut-tree is used. When the food is ready

/53 cont./

782 and has been brought into the smithy, the blacksmith puts
326 all his instruments on the anvil; a brazier with coals is placed nearby and the whole family kneels down around the anvil. After taking off his bashlyk and his belt (as proof that he addresses Shasha with an open heart and mind), the smith lights a wax candle, throws incense on the coals of the brazier, and prays to Shasha to bless him and his family with good health and long life, and to make the instruments forged from iron do him good rather than harm. After all those present have pronounced "Amen" at the end of the prayer, the master of the house cuts pieces of the pie and of the organs roasted on the nut-wood spit and throws them on the brazier with the words: "Until that time when I am unable /54/ to feed with these little pieces all Shervashidzi and Anchabadzi, let no one in my family fall ill. I pray to you for this, Shasha, bringing to you a real sacrifice." The smith then cuts off just such little pieces from the other sacrifices and distributes them to all the members of the family, who eat them and wash them down with three swallows
[273] of wine. The host designates the wine for this repast immediately after the harvesting of the grapes and saves it in a separate jug called shĕsher gaphshi, buried in the smithy itself; under the fear of punishment by Shasha, no one dares to touch it, even in any extremity, before New Year's Eve, neither the host himself nor, all the more, one of the bystanders. Upon the completion of the praying, the prepared dishes are transferred to the house of the smith, where the neighbors gather and feast to the glory of Shasha until dawn.

782 Several princes also offer a prayer to Shasha on New
796 Year's Eve, in which case each of the persons present, having
565 been at one time dependent on these princes, brings a rooster. Shasha is one of those divinities called upon by the Abkhaz more often than others.

796 According to the understanding of the Abkhaz, the divinity whose name is called falsely immediately punishes the guilty one by those means or tools which are in the field of his specialty. Thus, for instance, one who has called

/54 cont,/

796 falsely the name of Aphi, who commands the thunderstorms, cannot be punished by means of firearms or side arms, which make up the specialty of Shasha, etc.

782 326 Oaths to Shasha are of two kinds: in the smithy and under the open sky. In the first instance, the smith, having placed the hammer on the anvil and crossed his hands on his breast, stands to one side of it, the one swearing the oath on the other side of the anvil, opposite the smith, and the one concerning whose affairs the oath is being sworn stands to the side. The one swearing the oath, having taken the hammer into his hands, says: "If I am guilty of that of which they accuse me, then may Shasha smash open my head on the anvil"; upon these words, he hits the anvil three times with the hammer, and the oath is considered sworn. In the second 782 instance, two sticks are driven into the ground, one opposite the other; on them are hung loaded rifles whose muzzles are trained on the space occupied by the one swearing the oath; those present stand to the side. The one swearing the oath pronounces, "If I said a lie, may Shasha shoot bullets through my head /55/ from these rifles," and he walks through the space between the rifles three times.

755 787 326 At the first sign of sickness accompanied by headaches, the person who has taken a false oath asks his relatives to find out from a female fortune-teller the cause of his ailment. [787] The fortune-teller, who has usually heard beforehand, from the blacksmith himself about everyone who has taken an oath, throws some beans and looks at the stars, and then indicates the cause of the sickness: a false oath sworn to Shasha on such and such a day, in connection with such and such a matter, and in such and such a smithy. One of the ailing person's relatives goes to the person concerning whose affairs the false oath was sworn and by gifts induces him to pray to Shasha to forgive the patient, promising, of course, that upon recovery the patient will give him complete satisfaction. Then they both go to the smithy where the oath was taken, and the

/55 cont./

755 782 326 sick man's accuser, taking off his belt to bear witness to the sincerity of his address to Shasha, approaches the anvil and utters a prayer in which he requests Shasha to deliver the guilty one from his ailment, with a pledge that after his recovery the sick man will come himself to beg for forgiveness from Shasha; then, leaving a piece of iron in the smithy, he goes to set the patient's mind at reast. If the sick man recovers, he satisfies the injured one and goes with him to the smithy, and, having put a small silver coin (no less than two rubles) on the anvil, thanks Shasha for his recovery; the ram, the bread, and the wine that he has brought with him are given to the blacksmith, from whom, after the prayer, he receives pieces of the ram's liver and heart; he sends these to his family as a token of Shasha's forgiveness. In company with his relatives, the injured party, and the blacksmith, he himself eats the food that was brought along in the blacksmith's house.

21.

The Prayer to Eyrig-aatsnykh

579 782 [776] [778] Eyrig-aatsnykh is the patron of stealing, plundering, and robbery. Beyond the river Bzyb this deity is called Chugurukhnykh; all the Abkhaz setting out to steal among the Ubykh, Shapsug, and other mountain-dwellers used to bring offerings to Chugurukhnykh, whose altar, if this expression may be used here, /56/ was located on a cliff beyond the fortification of Gagra. Prayers to this god are offered only by those who practice the "arts" of which he is the patron. An offering of four cone-shaped loaves of bread is brought; a prayer is said over them, asking a blessing upon the enterprise and giving a promise to sacrifice something else to the god in case of success. The loaves of bread are taken along on the trip. The thank-offering consists of something of the stolen goods, and if a horse or a head of cattle is taken, the sacrifice consists of a lock of the stolen animal's hair;

/56 cont./

579 782 all this is hung on trees near the place where Eyrig-aatsnykh is believed to have his permanent abode.

22.

Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh

776 Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh is worshiped as the mightiest [778] of the gods. Mt. Dudryuphsh is regarded as his abode. Those who dare to climb this mountain are immediately punished with blindness; therefore prayers and sacrifices to this deity are offered at the foot of the mountain. As a deity, Anybs-nykha has no exclusive, professional field of authority, but he is worshiped as higher and mightier than all the other gods. [782] The arrangement of prayers and sacrifices to him is the same as to Sha-sha, with the difference that when an oath is taken in his name, the formula is "May Anybs-nykha send me blindness and every ailment . . ., "etc.

778 [923] Anybs-nykha's residence is under the exclusive supervision of the large Abkhaz family Ankhaĕ-Chichba. The Chichba have enjoyed this right for several generations; it is a source of great profit to them, since permission to bring sacrifices to this deity must be bought from them with presents. Not far from the top of Mt. Dudryuphsh, the actual abode of Anybs-nykha, a stone lies under an oak; on this stone the image of the Holy Virgin has been carved. All those who [782] take an oath must put a coin or something metal under this stone, and woe to him who is tempted to take anything away, even one little thing, from among the objects lying there!

23.

/57/ Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

782 [796] [262] On Christmas Eve in every family chickens are killed and four kvakvari (small loaves of bread stuffed with cheese)

/57 cont./

[782] [796] [262] are made for each member of the family. The chickens must be fried and the kvakvari baked before cockcrow. Just after the first cockcrow the master of the house puts bowls on the table, into each of which he puts a chicken and four kvakvari; to each one he fastens a wax candle. A brazier with coals is placed near the table. All the members of the family kneel down around the table, each opposite his bowl, [789] and the eldest person in the family, after removing his cap and throwing incense in the brazier, asks God to preserve him and his family from stomach disorders. After the prayer, all rise, turn to the right, and bow to the east; then everyone eats his portion, and each does his best to finish the meal without fail before dawn.

On New Year's Eve, after supper, a prayer is again [796] [262] offered in each family to ask for all sorts of blessings. For this occasion a rectangular pie is prepared, stuffed with cheese; this is put on a board to which a wax candle is fastened. The whole family kneels around it, and the eldest in the clan throws incense on the coals and says the prayer; then the pie is eaten and the leftovers burned on the coals. This prayer is called Kalinda. On the first day of the New Year the prayer called Gunykhva (prayer of the heart) is offered. For this, a small loaf of wheat-bread stuffed with an [262] egg is prepared for each member of the family. The head of the family raises a loaf to the breast of each member, praying [789] to God to preserve them from heart ailments. After the prayer, each one eats his loaf.

24.

Drought

731 789 During a severe summer drought all the village girls gather in their best attire near the river. They divide themselves into three groups and make a raft of branches, cover this with straw, and make a doll, which they then dress up as a /58/ woman. When all these preparations are finished, a

/58 cont./

731 donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and
789 put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva
[539] dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins
[825] to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

25.

Saints

776 Independent of the general worship of all the deities dis-
778 cussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny,
[184] Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke
782 their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in
[796] fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.

[231] On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

/58 cont./

782 231 heifer is selected from the herd, and in the evening it is brought into the house where the family that is invoking the church's grace has its permanent residence. A supper is prepared, consisting of cooked or roast mutton, and the whole family washes and puts on clean linen. The head of the family takes a wax candle in one hand and in the other the rope tied around the calf's neck; he addresses the /59/ cathedral with a prayer for his protection and that of his family; he states that the calf will be dedicated to the church and that all its male offspring will be sacrificed to it, and that, instead of heifers, rams will be sacrificed. After this prayer an incision is made in the calf's ear; from this time on it is considered inviolable and cannot be used for food. On the day of its dedication to the cathedral the calf must spend the night in the house with the family.

782 778 If an inhabitant of one of the three above-mentioned villages moves away, he is obliged to bring an offering each year to the cathedral in the village of his birth. Girls from these villages who marry inhabitants of other villages are not exempt from this rule. They as well as their children are still regarded as under the protection of the cathedrals of Lykhny, Pitsunda, or Ilori and are therefore obliged to offer sacrifices to them.

M. Dzhanashvili

539 /A supplement on pp. 60-64, containing Abkhaz sayings and proverbs, is omitted in the translation; see foreign text./

I: Dzhanashvili R13 Abkhaz R13

ЗАПИСКИ
КАВКАЗСКАГО ОТДѢЛА
ИМПЕРАТОРСКАГО
РУССКАГО ГЕОГРАФИЧЕСКАГО ОБЩЕСТВА

КНИЖКА XVI

MÉMOIRES
DE LA SECTION CAUCASIENNE
DE LA SOCIETE IMPERIALE RUSSE DE GÉOGRAPHIE.
LIVRE XVI.

Тифлисъ.
Типографія: Груз. Изд. Товарищ. и К. К. Ковзовскаго.
1894.

1: Dzhanashvili R13 Abkhaz R13

Подъ редакціею Дѣйствительныхъ Членовъ Кавказскаго Отдѣла Императорскаго Русск. Географич. Общ. Н. К. Зейдлица и Е. И. Кондратенко.

Печатано по распоряженію Кавказскаго Отдѣла Императорскаго Русскаго Географическаго Общества.

l: Dzhanashvili R13 Abkhaz R13

ОТЪ РЕДАКЦІИ.

Г. М. Г. Джанашвили, въ своей компилятивной статьѣ „Абхазія и абхазцы", помѣщенной въ настоящей, XVI, кн. „Записокъ Отдѣла", вводя абхазскія и грузинскія слова, изображалъ ихъ буквами русскаго алфавита, съ присоединеніемъ къ нимъ, въ видахъ нѣсколько болѣе точнаго выраженія произношенія этихъ словъ, двухъ буквъ французской азбуки (h и q) и одной буквы грузинской (ჳ). Буква h введена авторомъ для обозначенія, что та буква русской азбуки, около которой будетъ стоять h, должна произноситься съ придыханіемъ; буква q—предназначена для выраженія глубоко-гортаннаго к, а буква грузинская ჳ—для выраженія звука нѣсколько подходящаго къ сочетанію русскихъ буквъ *т* и *ч*. По просьбѣ г. Джанашвили, упустившаго объ этомъ разъяснить въ его предисловіи, редакція, въ устраненіе недоразумѣній, могущихъ явиться при чтеніи статьи „Абхазія и абхазцы", ставитъ въ извѣстность читателей.

Г. Н. М. Альбовъ, авторъ статьи—„Ботанико-географическія изслѣдованія въ Западномъ Закавказьи", составляющей предварительное сообщеніе его, прочитанное имъ въ общемъ собраніи Кавказскаго Отдѣла Географическаго Общества и помѣщенное въ настоящей, XVI, кн. „Записокъ Отдѣла",—проситъ насъ сдѣлать извѣстнымъ, что предположеніе его, высказанное имъ въ этой статьѣ, основанное на приблизительныхъ наблюденіяхъ, будто известняки, флору на которыхъ онъ изучалъ въ Западномъ Закавказьи, есть юрскіе, не оправдалось, послѣ изслѣдованія въ Новороссійскомъ университетѣ породъ известняковъ, собранныхъ г. Альбовымъ въ названной части края.

Редакція, желая пополнить ботанико-географическія свѣдѣнія о западной части Закавказья, помѣстила въ настоящей книжкѣ „Записокъ", съ разрѣшенія г. Дика, ботаника и садовладѣльца въ Саксоніи, въ переводѣ, пять его статей, большею частью посвященныхъ имъ путешествію его въ этой части края. Такой-же трудъ (ботанико-географическій) о Западномъ Закавказьи гг. Сомье и Левье, ботаниковъ во Флоренціи, редакція, заручившись согласіемъ названныхъ ученыхъ, предполагаетъ помѣстить въ слѣдующей книжкѣ „Извѣстій".

Абхазія и абхазцы.

(Этнографическій очеркъ)

ПРЕДИСЛОВІЕ.

Абхазцы извѣстны съ древнихъ временъ: Плиній (29—79 по Р. Х.) называетъ ихъ абсилами (absilae), Арріанъ (100—160 по Р. Х.)—апсилами (αψιλαι), древнія лѣтописи Грузіи—апhшил'ами (апhшили) и апhсар'ами (апhсари). Сами абхазцы называютъ себя апhсуа, а свою страну—Апhси; нынѣшніе грузины называютъ ихъ различно: абхази, апхази, апhхази.

Изъ сравненія этихъ именъ видно, что этническое названіе абхазцевъ образовалось изъ апс, абс, апhс, апhш. Въ кавказскихъ языкахъ звуки б, п, пh, м, в, также с, ш, весьма часто замѣняютъ другъ друга. Вотъ нѣсколько примѣровъ: а-м-сэба=а-в-сэба =ап-h-шэпhа, что̀ значитъ наполнять; сули=шури, душа; м-равали =б равали=б-рали=пh-рэли, множество; п-ркэ=б-ркэ и пр. Итакъ, тождество абс, апс, апhс и абш, апс, апhш несомнѣнно. Что-же значитъ абс или апhш?

Прежде всего нужно сказать, что въ абхазскомъ языкѣ существительнымъ именамъ предшествуетъ „а", соотвѣтствующее значенію члена le и la во французскомъ языкѣ. Это „а" въ словосочетаніи часто выпадаетъ. Возьмемъ, для примѣра, одинаковыя слова, какъ въ грузинскомъ, такъ и въ абхазскомъ языкѣ:

грузинскія:	абхазскія:	
кhалакhи	а—кhалакh	городъ
патhла	а—патhра	крещеніе
камбечи	а—камбаш	буйволъ
пана	а—пан	мать
кhартhуали	а—кhартhуа	грузинъ
лази	а—лаз	лазистанецъ
каба	а—каба	платье

грузинскія:	абхазскія:	
калѳа	а—калѳа	фалда
хэрхи	а—хуархи	нива
макратэли	а—макратиа	ножницы
киба	а—киба	лѣстница
гэмо	а—гэма	вкусъ
кнваби	а—кнваб	котелъ
угнэли (угну, сванское)	а—угну	ярмо
гули (гун, сванское)	а—гу	сердце
зари	а—зар	плачъ, рыданіе

Нерѣдко и грузинскій языкъ прибѣгаетъ къ такому-же способу образованія существительныхъ изъ глагольныхъ корней, съ добавленіемъ къ концу именъ вспомогательнаго глагола л и или а р и *) (3-е лицо един. числа изъяв. накл., значитъ—есть). Напр. д э г или д г и значитъ—стой, крѣпись; а-д э г или а-д г и—вставай; а-д г и-л и—твердь, земля, суша. Также: н у с х э—считай, м-н у с х э-л и—считающій, а-м-н у с х э-л и—счетоводъ.

Итакъ, мы имѣемъ въ корнѣ только п h с или п h ш, что на многихъ кавказскихъ языкахъ, не исключая языковъ абхазскаго и грузинскаго, имѣетъ многоразличныя родственныя значенія рѣки, воды, влаги, души, источника и пр. По-черкесски, напр., п h д э э или п h с е значитъ рѣка, вода; по-грузински: п h ш а,—рѣка, рѣчка, ключевая вода; пhшэ-на или пhши-нва—дыханіе, вздохъ, запахъ; м-пhшуэни—дышащій, душа, духъ; п h с а -лить, п h с э л и—урина; по-абхазски: а пh с—душа, а пh ш а вѣтеръ, воздухъ; а д з и (ацъа)—вода, рѣка, ручей; а д з и-х и—источникъ: а д з и-ж и--озеро, амшин—море, и т. д.

Извѣстно, что многіе древніе народы свои названія получили отъ тѣхъ водъ, на берегахъ которыхъ они жили. Припомнимъ, напр., хоть изъ древне-славянской исторіи—поморянъ, полабовъ, бужанъ и друг. **).

---

*) а р и—есть; въ грузинскомъ языкѣ и его діалектахъ этотъ глаголъ является то въ формѣ а (напр. каци-а=человѣкъ есть) то въ формѣ л и (ара-ли=не-есть), то р и или р э (ахло-рэ=близко есть). Изъ нихъ въ грузинскомъ преобладаетъ употребленіе формы а р и, въ мингрельскомъ—р э, р и, р о, въ сванскомъ—л и, а р ц, въ абхазскомъ—л, р.

**) „Разселяясь по Европѣ, славяне дали рѣкамъ тѣ древнѣйшія названія, вынесенныя ими съ востока, которыя изначала употреблялись, какъ нарицательныя имена рѣки или воды вообще. Такъ, названія: Сава, Драва, Одра (Одеръ), Ра, Упа, Ока, Донъ, Дунай, Двина—арійскаго происхожденія и имѣютъ въ санскритѣ родственныя себѣ формы и кор-

Тоже самое мы видимъ и въ Грузіи, гдѣ, въ большинствѣ случаевъ, названія провинцій и племенъ, населяющихъ ихъ, образовались изъ понятій, означающихъ рѣку, источникъ, озеро, воду и пр. Такъ, напр., Д ч а значитъ источникъ, колодезь, рѣка; д ч а-р и=рѣчной, а-д ч а р и=Адчара (въ турецкой Грузіи - Аджарія); д ч а р и=(рѣчной)=Дчарская область (въ Закаталахъ); д ч а-н и значитъ ключи, рѣки, - д ч а н-э т h и=Дчанетія (грузинское названіе всей турецкой Грузіи); д ч а р о х и=р. Дчорохъ; д ч а-л а, роща, рѣка, —д ч а л а-д и д и=Дчаладиди (буквально „большая рѣка").

П h ш а=рѣчка, П h ш а-э т h и=Пшавія; П h ш а=рѣка около Гори, рѣка въ Гуріи, въ Аджаріи и въ другихъ мѣстахъ; А б а ш а (древн. А п h ш а)=рѣка въ Имеретіи; П h а с и с и (древн. пhсиси)=рѣка Пhазъ, Пhасъ (буквально - рѣчной: пhасиси—родит. пад.).

Отъ этого-же корня происходитъ а-пhши-ли, какъ изъ „дги" а-дги-ли. Въ буквальномъ переводѣ „а-пhши-ли" должно означать: „рѣчной". Такимъ образомъ, въ названіяхъ а п h ш и л и п h ш а э л и (пшавецъ) и А б а ш э л и=А б ш э л и (житель береговъ р. Абаши) я нахожу полнѣйшее сходство. Тоже самое значитъ и слово А б с а р и, гдѣ, вмѣсто существительнаго глагола а л и, стоитъ другая его форма а р и (Абс-ари=Абс-али); а такъ какъ грузинскія а р и, а л и и сокращенно р и, л и въ абхазскомъ языкѣ переходятъ въ „а" и „уа" (Кhартhу-али=акhыртhу-а, грузинъ, гурули=а-гура-а, гуріецъ, мэ-грэ-ли=а-гру-а, мингрелецъ), то мы и имѣемъ а б с у а=абхазецъ, т. е. грузинское а б ш а-л и (абхазецъ)=равнозначащее абхазскому а б с у-а.

Отъ этого-же корня происходятъ названія многихъ рѣчекъ въ Абхазіи, какъ-то: П h ш и ц а (рукавъ Бзыби), П h ш а н д р а (около сел. Лыхны), р. П h с ц э, р. Хашу-П h с э, р. П h с б у, Туа-п h с э и пр.

ни съ указаннымъ общимъ значеніемъ: dhuni, dhoni (рѣка) доселѣ удерживаетъ свой первоначальный смыслъ на Кавказѣ, гдѣ у осетинъ формы д у н и д о н означаютъ всякую рѣку и воду; у славянъ-же Донъ перешло въ собственное имя, а форма д у н съ окончаніемъ а въ образовала: Дунавъ, а потомъ Дунай. Слово Дунай, служащее собственнымъ именемъ извѣстной рѣки, до сихъ поръ употребляется и какъ нарицательное для всякихъ большихъ и малыхъ рѣкъ. Примѣры можно видѣть въ галицкихъ и польскихъ пѣсняхъ: „за рѣками—за дунаями" (Аѳанасьевъ. Поэтическія воззрѣнія славянъ на природу, II, 220)

Сами единоплеменные абхазцамъ черкесы, называемые туземцами а д з ы х ы, а д з ы г и, а д з е г и, получили свое названіе отъ того-же корня д з ы или д з э, что означаетъ воду, рѣку, море. По-черкесски, какъ мы выше сказали, п h ы э или п h д з е значитъ вода, рѣка; тоже самое значитъ и въ грузинскомъ и абхазскомъ языкахъ. Кромѣ того, въ этихъ послѣднихъ языкахъ изъ того-же корня образовались слова з г h у а или д з у г h в а (въ грузинскомъ, мингрельскомъ и сванскомъ), что значитъ море, а д з ы ж ы (по-абхазски) озеро, а д з ы х ы (по-абхазски-же) источникъ, ключевая вода. Вотъ откуда а д з ы х ы (черкесы) и стали называться таковымъ именемъ. Точно также слово ш а п h с у г и съ грузинскаго буквально значитъ рѣчной, у водъ живущій (ша-пhсу-ги=са-пhсу-ги=са-пhшу-ги въ переводѣ значитъ „гдѣ вода —тамъ").

Интереснѣе всего другое грузинское слово т б а, что значитъ озеро. Это слово въ древнихъ письменныхъ памятникахъ и нынѣ, въ мингрельскомъ діалектѣ встрѣчается и произносится одинаково—т о б а; сваны-же произносятъ его—т и б а р и иногда т у б а р, что означаетъ и озеро, и глубокое ущелье и, вообще, глубокую ложбину. Уже въ датированныхъ памятникахъ X вѣка мы встрѣчаемъ названіе древней грузинской провинціи Т б э т h и, въ центрѣ которой нынѣ красуются развалины знаменитой Тбетской церкви, построенной Ашотомъ Кухомъ († 918 г.). Т б э т h а значитъ „озерье", „озера"; Т б э л и и т о б э л и значитъ „озерецъ" *), озерный, при озерѣ находящійся или живущій. А между грузинскимъ Тобэли и библейскимъ Thобэли, которыя на картахъ Киперта занимаютъ какъ-разъ то мѣсто, гдѣ находится грузинская провинція Тобэтһа (Тобэли), я не нахожу никакой разницы.

Этихъ Thобэловъ греко-римскіе писатели иногда именуютъ Т и б а р э н а м и, а это названіе есть тоже грузинское Тобэли сванскаго произношенія „Тибар". Во множественномъ числѣ изъ этого слова мы имѣемъ „Тибарэни", т. е. Тибарцы—озерцы. Гекатей (около 550 г. до Р. Хр.) называетъ ихъ Типанисн (Типаниссэ), что стоитъ въ родит. над. множ. числа и переводится съ грузинскаго словомъ „озерные". Типаниси, Тибарены греко-римскими писателями считаются народомъ, родственнымъ Мосхамъ и Колхамъ. Отъ этого-же корня мы имѣемъ теперь множество на-

*) „Тбэли" (по мингрельскому произношенію „тобэли") есть титулъ Тбетскихъ епископовъ съ 918 года.

званій, какъ-то: Тобарозани (озерастый), озеро Тапаравань; Тобаніэри (озерный), селеніе въ Имеретіи (около Кутаиса); Тоба-қурэ (озеро-бухта), селеніе въ Мингреліи; Дидъ-тба, великое озеро, около Царскихъ Колодцевъ; Тубанис-тба, озерное-озеро, въ Ахалкалакскомъ уѣздѣ; Тқэ-тоба (лѣсъ-озеро), въ Закатальскомъ округѣ и друг.

Оставляя за собою право въ другой разъ вернуться къ болѣе подробному выясненію своего взгляда на происхожденіе этническихъ названій картвельскаго племени, перехожу къ изложенію краткаго историческаго очерка Абхазіи.

Лѣтописи Грузіи, достовѣрность и древность которыхъ отвергались покойнымъ К. П. Паткановымъ, но вполнѣ подтверждаются вновь найденной грузинской хроникой первой половины X вѣка, свидѣтельствуютъ, что распространителемъ христіанства въ Абхазіи былъ Симонъ Кананитъ, прибывшій въ Грузію, вмѣстѣ съ апостоломъ Андреемъ. Оба апостола вступили въ Аджарію, откуда Андрей направился къ Месхетіи (къ Ахалциху), а Симонъ Кананитъ къ Имеретіи и Абхазіи. Хотя послѣдній сдѣлался здѣсь жертвою язычниковъ, но брошенныя имъ сѣмена христіанства не погибли безслѣдно: по истеченіи 2—3 вѣковъ, они взошли, и языческій міръ просіялъ свѣтомъ христіанскаго ученія. На мѣстѣ, гдѣ былъ убитъ Симонъ Кананитъ, былъ воздвигнутъ храмъ, который и до нашего времени привлекаетъ множество богомольцевъ.

О христіанствѣ въ Абхазіи и Грузіи мы имѣемъ свѣдѣнія и изъ греко-римскихъ писателей. Такъ, напр., Прокопій, писатель конца VI вѣка, говоритъ: „Христіанство нигдѣ такъ чисто не сохраняется, какъ въ Иверіи". Далѣе: „Съ тѣхъ поръ, какъ царствуетъ Юстиніанъ Августъ, нравы абхазцевъ замѣтно смягчились, потому что они приняли христіанство. Юстиніанъ послалъ къ нимъ одного изъ своихъ евнуховъ—Еверрата, абхазца по рожденію, съ цѣлью воспрещать князьямъ производить кастратовъ. Юстиніанъ же воздвигъ у абазговъ храмъ Божіей Матери и назначилъ въ него священниковъ; онъ позаботился, чтобы послѣдніе распространяли христіанство" *). Указываемый Прокопіемъ храмъ Божіей Матери есть знаменитый Бичвинтскій (Пицундскій) храмъ, который съ древнѣйшаго времени игралъ видную роль не только въ религіозной, но и въ политической жизни абхазцевъ. Эриставъ абхаз-

*) Histoire de la Géorgie, par Brosset, St. Pétersb. 1858, 4°, II, p. 240.

l: Dzhanashvili R13 Abkhaz R13

ский Леонъ II, пользуясь ослабленіемъ Грузіи послѣ двукратнаго нашествія арабскаго воинства, отложился отъ царя Грузіи Джуаншера и принялъ титулъ царя абхазскаго въ 786 году. Столицей царства онъ избралъ Вичвинту, гдѣ уже святительствовали католикосы. Самостоятельность абхазскаго царства продлилась всего два вѣка. Царь Грузіи Давидъ Великій, будучи бездѣтенъ, усыновилъ себѣ Баграта III (980—1014), родившагося отъ супружества Гургена, наслѣдника грузинскаго престола, съ дочерью Георгія II, царя абхазскаго, Гурандухтою. А такъ какъ мужеская линія царей абхазскихъ, со смертію слѣпого царя Ѳеодосія II, пресѣклась, то царство абхазское, по праву ближайшаго родства съ этимъ домомъ, вмѣстѣ съ удѣлами Багратидовъ Самцхійскихъ, было соединено съ грузинскимъ, и Багратъ III принялъ титулъ царя грузинскаго и абхазскаго. Съ этого-же времени католикосы Мцхетскіе стали титуловаться католикосами „всея Грузіи" и иногда „всея Грузіи и Абхазіи". Въ цвѣтущій періодъ грузинской исторіи (съ X по XII вѣкъ) вся Абхазія и особенно береговыя части ея покрылись городами, монастырями, церквами и укрѣпленными замками. Съ конца XV вѣка, т. е. по паденіи Византіи и утвержденіи на Софійскомъ храмѣ вмѣсто креста—полумѣсяца, въ Абхазіи, мало-по-малу, распространилось магометанство, чему еще болѣе содѣйствовало то обстоятельство, что Грузія, ослабленная и разоренная въ многовѣковой борьбѣ съ монголами и затѣмъ съ персами и турками, въ XV-мъ же вѣкѣ распалась на три царства (кахетинское, карталинское и имеретинское) и пять княжествъ (самцхійское, сванское, мингрельское, абхазское и гурійское); при этомъ турки покорили Аджарію и стали въ ней распространять магометанство. Въ это время и кавказскіе горцы (лезгины, чеченцы, сѣверные осетины, черкесы и др.) измѣнили христіанству и приняли магометанство. Грузія, со всѣхъ сторонъ окруженная магометанствомъ, съ трудомъ, но еще сохраняла свою вѣру; но слабая и маленькая Абхазія этого не могла сдѣлать: магометанское ученіе сильно распространилось въ ней и совершенно поглотило-бы христіанство, еслибы грузины своевременно не пригласили сѣвернаго колосса на защиту всѣхъ древнихъ аборигеновъ Кавказа.

Источниками и пособіями при составленіи настоящаго этнографическаго очерка Абхазіи послужили автору слѣдующія статьи абхазцевъ: 1. „Абхазія и абхазцы", этнографическій очеркъ П. Гіоргидзе, помѣщенный въ „Иверіи" за 1888 г.; 2. „Абхазія"

l: Dzhanashvili R13 Abkhaz R13

этнографическій очеркъ К. Мадчавариани, въ газетѣ „Дроэба“ 1884—1885 гг.; 3. „Очеркъ абхазской миѳологіи“, Званбая, „Кавказъ“ за 1867 г., номера 74, 75 и 76; 4. „Религіозныя вѣрованія абхазцевъ“, А., въ „Сборникѣ свѣдѣній о кавказскихъ горцахъ“, вып. V, и 5. „Экономическое положеніе туземнаго населенія Сухумскаго отдѣла“, его-же, въ томъ-же „Сборникѣ“, вып. VI.

М. Джанашвили.

25 апрѣля 1892 года.
Г. Тифлисъ.

l: Dzhanashvili R13 Abkhaz R13

Абхазія и абхазцы.

I.

Абхазецъ.—Его характеръ.—Грабежи, нападенія и воровство.—Краснорѣчіе абхазца.—Месть за кровь.—Любовь къ родинѣ.—Гостепріимство, вѣжливость и привѣтливость.—Честность.—Выгода.—Народныя игры.—Поэзія.

Абхазецъ—средняго роста, худощавый, смуглый, съ черными волосами и глазами горецъ. Онъ безстрашенъ, смѣлъ и гордъ, но, вмѣстѣ съ тѣмъ, непостояненъ и чрезвычайно вспыльчивъ. На ряду съ природною даровитостью, красотой и, вообще, симпатичными сторонами характера, въ немъ проявляется немало и отрицательныхъ чертъ, о которыхъ мы скажемъ ниже.

Абхазцы съ древнѣйшихъ временъ слывутъ за самыхъ безстрашныхъ и смѣлыхъ разбойниковъ. Они постоянно дѣлали набѣги на сосѣдей, грабили ихъ и опустошали. Впрочемъ, грабежи и набѣги—это общая черта всѣхъ вообще горцевъ. „Внѣ грабежа и набѣговъ жизнь не жизнь горцу", говоритъ въ своемъ сочиненіи Сергѣй Мечъ. Въ этой чертѣ горца—вся его поэзія, все украшеніе его существованія. Одинъ только тигръ можетъ сравниться съ горцемъ въ неожиданности и быстротѣ нападенія въ глухую, темную ночь на спящее селеніе. Идя на добычу, горецъ увѣренъ, что его ничто не выдастъ и не измѣнитъ ни кинжалъ, который у него всегда въ ножнахъ, ни блескъ ружья, завернутаго въ чахолъ, ни мягкая неслышная поступь ноги, обутой въ лапоть, ни хорошообученный для ночной ѣзды конь, ни его, наконецъ, языкъ, шипящіе звуки котораго напоминаютъ шелестъ листьевъ.... Съ глазами, налитыми кровью, съ кинжаломъ въ одной и пистолетомъ въ другой рукѣ, съ страшнымъ гикомъ бросается горецъ въ битву и въ это время забываетъ все, кромѣ побѣды.... Таковы абхазцы и ихъ сосѣди.

Абхазецъ и понынѣ считаетъ воровство удальствомъ, геро-

изомъ и чуть ли не такою-же необходимостью, какъ пища и питье. Этимъ недугомъ одинаково страдаютъ, отъ мала до велика, всѣ абхазцы—мужчины, женщины и дѣти, а высшее абхазское сословіе обратило его даже въ постоянное свое ремесло. Мѣняются времена и обстоятельства, поколѣнія за поколѣніями медленно, но постоянно вносятъ въ абхазскую жизнь новыя культурныя начала,—и одно лишь воровство неизмѣнно остается излюбленнымъ занятіемъ абхазца, какъ-бы освященное авторитетомъ сѣдой старины....

Впрочемъ, что тутъ удивительнаго? Абхазецъ, будучи еще ребенкомъ, неотразимо подчиненъ окружающимъ его обстоятельствамъ и всевозможнымъ стихійнымъ воздѣйствіямъ. Сообразно этимъ внѣшнимъ стихійнымъ или внутреннимъ нравственнымъ вліяніямъ, онъ и поступаетъ, дѣлаясь взрослымъ человѣкомъ. Какія-же воздѣйствія испытываетъ абхазецъ въ юности и какія нравственныя начала выноситъ онъ изъ явленій и фактовъ окружающей его природы и среды?.. Вотъ онъ, ребенкомъ, держа въ рукѣ ножъ съ рукояткою больше себя, пасетъ въ лѣсу или въ горахъ буйволовъ или козъ и наблюдаетъ происходящее у него передъ глазами: вонъ лиса подстерегла неосторожную дикую курочку, схватила ее и поволокла на расправу въ лѣсную чащу; вонъ изголодавшійся волкъ, на глазахъ у зазѣвавшагося пастуха, такого-же подростка, какъ и онъ, выхватилъ изъ стада ягненочка; вонъ тамъ, подальше, пернатый хищникъ, улучивъ удобную минуту, стрѣлой налетѣлъ на слабаго лѣсного обитателя и, вцѣпившись въ него когтями, поднялся съ пойманнымъ животнымъ и исчезъ въ синевѣ неба... и такъ изъ дня въ день. Одни и тѣ-же образцы безнаказаннаго грабежа и насилія, повседневно повторяющіеся, не могутъ не оставить, конечно, глубокихъ слѣдовъ въ душѣ наблюдательнаго подростка-пастуха. Наблюденныя имъ въ окружающей природѣ явленія, по приходѣ его домой, скрѣпляются и, такъ сказать, освящаются въ его глазахъ авторитетомъ старшихъ членовъ семьи: здѣсь ежедневно происходятъ пересуды и перебранки по случаю потери или угона кѣмъ-то чужого скота; онъ слышитъ, съ одной стороны, похвалы и одобреніе воровству, а съ другой—проклятія по адресу уворовавшаго; онъ видитъ, наконецъ, какъ, хозяйка семьи, въ законности поступковъ которой ему ни разу не приходило въ голову сомнѣваться, съ великою осторожностью достаетъ зарытое въ землѣ мясо украденнаго у сосѣдей животнаго и варитъ его... Когда-же, умудренный наблюденіемъ окружающей среды и удачными опытами своихъ близкихъ, ребенокъ вы-

I: Dzhanashvili R13 Abkhaz R13

ростаетъ въ взрослаго юношу,—то родители и, вообще, представители семьи даютъ ему оружіе, предварительно благословивъ его словами: „пріобрѣтай теперь самъ, находи себѣ состояніе воровствомъ и грабежомъ, подобно тому, какъ это дѣлаютъ всѣ твои сверстники". Слѣдовательно, воровство не только получаетъ здѣсь значеніе примѣра, достойнаго, при благопріятномъ случаѣ, подражанія; но оно предлагается, какъ обязательный modus vivendi, какъ догматъ, санкціонированный авторитетомъ родителей и, вообще, старшихъ въ семьѣ.

Обратимъ вниманіе еще на другое обстоятельство. Дѣти, какъ извѣстно, весьма любятъ сказки и всякаго рода повѣствованія и легенды. Въ длинныя зимнія ночи старики и старухи разсказываютъ ихъ абхазскимъ дѣтямъ. Но большинство подобныхъ разсказовъ также вредно въ смыслѣ нравственнаго вліянія, ибо содержаніе этихъ легендъ, сказокъ и повѣствованій дальше восхваленій воровству, грабежу и нападеніямъ не идетъ; въ нихъ прославляется смѣлость, рѣшимость и храбрость какого нибудь „абрага" (абрекъ=разбойникъ), его воровская находчивость, смѣтливость при затрудненіяхъ, удальство при грабежѣ и захватѣ чужого добра. Этимъ, отчасти, быть можетъ, объясняется то печальное явленіе въ жизни абхазцевъ, что лица, даже понюхавшія средняго образованія, по возвращеніи на родину подчасъ вновь отдаются усвоенному съ дѣтства ремеслу—воровству. Виноваты тутъ, конечно, не школа и не среднее образованіе, а тѣ традиціонныя воззрѣнія на это „ремесло", отъ соприкосновенія съ которыми гибнетъ всякое иное единичное воззрѣніе на него, подобно тому, какъ одинокій пшеничный колосъ глохнетъ среди окружающихъ его плевелъ.

Въ воровствѣ абхазецъ вѣроломенъ. Лучшіе, повидимому, друзья не стѣсняются красть другъ у друга, и въ Абхазіи не рѣдкость, что братъ крадетъ у брата, отецъ у сына, сынъ у отца. Вошло чуть-ли не въ поговорку, что когда абхазцу не у кого красть, такъ онъ крадетъ у самого себя. Бывали примѣры, что абхазецъ, выкравъ у сосѣда, въ темную ночь, лошадь и обмѣнявъ ее, по угонѣ за тридевять земель, на другую, въ туже ночь возвращался домой, а на утро, при первой-же суматохѣ по случаю кражи у сосѣда, первымъ являлся къ нему съ соболѣнованіями и, въ числѣ другихъ, посылая проклятія по адресу укравшаго, съ остервенѣніемъ начался, вмѣстѣ съ другими, въ догонку за воромъ.

Воръ-абхазецъ не сознается въ преступленіи даже и тогда,

когда могъ-бы быть уличенъ свидѣтельскими показаніями. При разборахъ воровскихъ дѣлъ на сельскихъ сходахъ, на постановленія судей въ пользу обвиняемаго нерѣдко вліяютъ смѣлость оправдательныхъ его рѣчей, нахальная изворотливость обвиняемаго и то, что называется „заговаривать зубы". Вообще-же, на такихъ сходахъ всякое хитроумное, хотя-бы и совершенно безстыжее, краснобайство завѣдомаго вора находитъ себѣ не только внимательныхъ слушателей, но и почитателей. „Смѣлостью рѣчи, говорятъ въ такихъ случаяхъ, онъ спасъ себя".

И хотя такое воровское „краснорѣчіе" часто избавляетъ виновнаго отъ наказаній, но потерпѣвшій, понятно, не убѣждается въ его правотѣ и, въ свою очередь, старается, при удобномъ случаѣ, выместить на немъ свои убытки, по рецепту: „око за око и зубъ за зубъ".

Месть за пролитую кровь въ наши дни проявляется сравнительно въ слабой степени; но въ былыя времена она составляла одну изъ главнѣйшихъ чертъ въ жизни абхазца. Обычай кровомщенія обязываетъ родственника убитаго убить или самого убійцу, или-же его родственника. Кровомщеніе переходитъ изъ поколѣнія въ поколѣніе и составляетъ священную обязанность человѣка; невымещеніе крови считаетъ стыдомъ и посрамленіемъ для живыхъ сородичей убитаго. По убѣжденію абхазца, если, по какимъ нибудь обстоятельствамъ, кровь останется невымещенною, она сама начнетъ вымещать за себя.

Въ томъ случаѣ, когда самъ убійца спасался бѣгствомъ, отвѣтственнымъ за него лицомъ являлся его родственникъ: его убивали, уводили въ плѣнъ или грабили и разоряли въ конецъ. Убійство даже самаго послѣдняго раба часто приводило къ столкновенію цѣлыя селенія; слѣдствіемъ такой вражды бывало то, что одно изъ селеній должно было въ конецъ разориться, либо выселиться въ другое мѣсто, если между ними не устанавливалось взаимнаго соглашенія и примиренія.

Въ дѣлѣ кровомщенія большую роль играло происхожденіе. Если, напримѣръ, князь убивалъ крестьянина, то родственники послѣдняго не имѣли права вымещать на убійцѣ кровь убитаго, ибо „кровь крестьянъ не одинакова съ княжеской". Поэтому, взамѣнъ убійцы-князя, за пролитую имъ кровь долженъ былъ отвѣтствовать его воспитатель.

За кровь крестьянина, дворянина и князя взималось неодинаково.

Хотя личныя достоинства человѣка въ Абхазіи обращали на

себя особенное вниманіе, но, тѣмъ не менѣе, кровь крестьянина стоимостью была ниже крови дворянина, а этого послѣдняго ниже крови князя. Такъ, напримѣръ, если кровь крестьянина цѣнилась въ пять душъ человѣческихъ, то кровь дворянина стоила втрое, а князя въ пять разъ дороже, чѣмъ кровь крестьянина. Стоимость крови опредѣлялась по пядямъ. Душа (человѣкъ) по росту въ 4 пяди цѣнилась въ 30 коровъ или въ 30 руб. сереб., въ пять пядей—50 коровъ или 50 руб. сер. и въ шесть пядей—70 коровъ или 70 руб. сер. Въ придачу приплачивалось еще оружіемъ и одеждою. За кровь уплачивалось коровами, козами, овцами и ульями. Число послѣднихъ опредѣлялось, сообразно стоимости коровы.

Если цѣна крови въ опредѣленный срокъ не уплачивалась, то въ концѣ года, взамѣнъ стоимости 4 пядей, писалось пять, взамѣнъ пяти—6, а шести—7, такъ что и вообще значительный долгъ увеличивался еще больше и тяжелымъ бременемъ ложился на плательщика. Но у абхазцевъ былъ одинъ прекрасный обычай—приходить на помощь къ несостоятельному должнику. Послѣднему стоило только сказать, что за нимъ „остается кровь", и всякій вносилъ свою лепту на уплату его долга.

Лучшимъ средствомъ для полнаго умиротворенія враждующихъ за кровь считался слѣдующій обрядъ. Родственникъ убійцы устраивалъ пиръ и, черезъ посредниковъ, приглашалъ самого ищущаго крови, или его сына. Тутъ достаточно было убѣдить ищущаго крови приложить свои губы къ груди жены или матери должника, чтобы, вслѣдствіе одного этого акта, между ними установился вѣчный и нерушимый миръ. Если-же кровомститель не угомонялся и не приходилъ на пиръ, то противная сторона старалась украсть или инымъ способомъ залучить къ себѣ въ домъ его сына или близкаго родственника. Если это удавалось, то и миръ, волей-неволей, устанавливался, ибо убивать воспитателя считалось поруганіемъ и обезчещеніемъ „груди", а это ужъ не соотвѣтствовало достоинству удальца.

Любовь къ родинѣ въ абхазцѣ развита до высшей мѣры. Нѣкоторые народы говорятъ: ubi bene, ibi patria; абхазецъ-же, наоборотъ, молится: „Лучше Абхазіи въ мірѣ нѣтъ мѣста. Боже, сохрани Абхазію". И въ горѣ, и въ радости онъ одинаково твердитъ эту молитву.

Гостепріимство, какъ и у всѣхъ древнихъ народовъ, въ Абхазіи свято чтится и сохраняется. Абхазецъ увѣренъ, что со всякимъ гостемъ нисходитъ по семи „барака" (благословеніе, бла-

годать, обиліе), изъ которыхъ одно остается у гостепріимца, а гостю Богъ опять даетъ убавленное седьмое барака. Самый бѣдный абхазецъ старается какъ можно лучше угостить гостя; когда абхазецъ видитъ странника, проходящаго по сельской дорогѣ въ вечернюю пору, тотчасъ-же предлагаетъ ему: „бзіала ваѣбит" —„добро васъ видѣть!" Затѣмъ онъ начинаетъ приглашать встрѣчнаго къ себѣ: „заверните ко мнѣ, отдохните; куда вы пойдете теперь? проведите у насъ ночь и утромъ рано идите своею дорогою". Если путникъ, будь онъ знакомый или незнакомецъ, приметъ приглашеніе и зайдетъ къ приглашающему, то его радушно встрѣтятъ и угостятъ на славу. А если путникъ не приметъ приглашенія, то, отвѣчая: „убэнхт" (разбогатѣй, благодарю), продолжаетъ свой путь. Обычай гостепріимства защищаетъ путника даже отъ кровомстителя. Разъ онъ въ гостяхъ, никто не въ правѣ его трогать.

Вмѣстѣ съ гостепріимствомъ и хлѣбосольствомъ, абхазецъ также весьма учтивъ, вѣжливъ и почтителенъ, особенно-же предъ старшими себя. Вотъ два-три примѣра.

Предъ принятіемъ всякой пищи абхазцы обыкновенно вымываютъ руки. Но мытье рукъ совершается по старшинству: очищеніе рукъ водою начинается самымъ старшимъ и оканчивается самымъ младшимъ изъ пирующихъ. Такой-же порядокъ существуетъ и во время распиванія вина. Но при этомъ и старшій не остается въ долгу: сначала онъ отказывается отъ своей очереди и предлагаетъ слѣдующему за собой лицу первымъ испить вина или вымыть руки. Этого требуетъ обычай учтивости и вѣжливости. Но, конечно, меньшій на-отрѣзъ отказывается отъ предлагаемой чести. Наконецъ, послѣ многократныхъ взаимныхъ уговоровъ, комплиментовъ, первый (старшій) принимаетъ таки приглашеніе. Затѣмъ такая-же церемонія происходитъ между вторымъ и третьимъ, между третьимъ и четвертымъ и т. д., до послѣдняго изъ пирующихъ. При этомъ, когда старшіе моютъ руки, младшіе должны стоять. Тутъ опять происходятъ церемоніи, увѣщеванія, чтобы они садились, но если приглашаемые не внимаютъ этимъ увѣщаніямъ и продолжаютъ стоять, тогда и старшій считаетъ уже неприличнымъ сидя мыть руки,—онъ также встаетъ. Съ такими-же церемоніями рѣшается вопросъ, кому изъ двухъ первымъ переступить порогъ и войти въ домъ. Вотъ, въ лѣсу, напр., встрѣтились два всадника. Младшій изъ нихъ, если имѣетъ что либо сказать старшему, долженъ слѣзть съ коня и докладывать, стоя на землѣ. При этомъ старшій убѣдительно просятъ его докладывать, не слѣзая.

Языкъ обхазцевъ также свидѣтельствуетъ объ ихъ вѣжливости. Въ разговорѣ абхазецъ часто прибѣгаетъ къ словамъ: прошу, твоя болѣзнь мнѣ, да сдѣлаться мнѣ жертвою твоихъ болѣзней, жертвою взамѣнъ тебя, да покружиться мнѣ вокругъ того мѣста, гдѣ ты лежишь, и т. д. Въ силу этого послѣдняго выраженія, абхазка, навѣстивъ своего больного питомца или долгое время не видѣннаго человѣка, три раза обходить его, говоря: „ацгэ мцугэ саизгат", т. е. да унести мнѣ твою болѣзнь, твое несчастіе.

У абхазца на каждый случай жизни имѣется особое привѣтствіе, въ которомъ высказывается пожеланіе благополучія, силы, побѣды, размноженія, прибыли и пр. Такъ, въ репертуарѣ всевозможныхъ абхазскихъ привѣтствій есть даже спеціально приноровленныя на случаи встрѣчъ ѣдущихъ на скачку, привѣтствія устроителю этихъ скачекъ и т. д. И это совершенно понятно и естественно для такого народа, какъ абхазцы, у которыхъ лошадь и оружіе составляютъ самые излюбленные предметы, высоко цѣнить которые они привыкаютъ чуть-ли не съ пеленокъ. Дѣти лицъ высшихъ сословій уже съ первыхъ лѣтъ жизни становятся прекрасными наѣздниками и оруженосцами. Пистолетъ, кинжалъ, шашка, ножъ и цѣлый арсеналъ оружія—постоянно украшаютъ любого абхазца. Для него нѣтъ выше удовольствія, когда онъ, вооруженный съ головы до ногъ, накинувъ на себя бурку, ѣдетъ съ сверстниками и подпѣваетъ веселую пѣсенку. Безъ лошади и оружія абхазцу и жизнь не въ жизнь!

Кромѣ скачекъ и джириты, въ жизни абхазца обращаютъ на себя вниманіе еще слѣдующія игры: 1. игра въ мячъ, 2. аркил-рики и 3. метаніе камня. Народная музыка и поэзія абхазцевъ весьма бѣдны. Единственный музыкальный инструментъ абхазцевъ, притомъ позаимствованный, судя по названію, у грузинъ, это а ч а н г у р, балалайка (груз. чонгури). Абхазское стихосложеніе, большею частью, соподчинено аллитераціи. Вотъ примѣры:

Варвулту... барфунту
Чілар царда цулардам
Арба арба сінарба
Маста мастароу
Маста стахоу
Сіамул уца
Сіамул сіахоу
Сіанджар уца.

l: Dzhanashvili R13 Abkhaz R13

II.

Домашняя жизнь абхазцевъ.—Семья.—Положеніе женщины.

Вся домашняя жизнь абхазца обставлена такъ незатѣйливо, что весь необходимый хозяйственный скарбъ, за исключеніемъ вещей желѣзныхъ, производится самимъ-же абхазцемъ, изъ того матеріала, который имѣется у него подъ рукой. Кузнечное ремесло, требующее уже нѣкоторыхъ спеціальныхъ техническихъ знаній, предоставлено особымъ мастерамъ этого дѣла. Въ каждомъ селеніи имѣется по два, по три кузнеца, которые изъ доставленнаго куска желѣза выдѣлываютъ все необходимое абхазцу. Кузнецы пользуются большимъ почетомъ въ обществѣ, и самое ремесло ихъ въ глазахъ абхазца имѣетъ священное значеніе.

Торговля считается постыднымъ ремесломъ и поэтому сами абхазцы не занимаются ею; но еслибы она была развита, то абхазцы многое могли-бы съ выгодой продавать. Такъ, напр., абхазки, кстати сказать, большія мастерицы на всякія домашнія работы, изъ овечьей и козьей кожи выдѣлываютъ сафьянъ (цуш), который такъ нравится иностранцамъ; этотъ ц у ш въ Абхазіи, лѣтомъ, служитъ постелью. Мужчины дѣлаютъ прекрасныя ложки изъ дерева и роговъ животныхъ. Многіе охотники убиваютъ по семи-восьми медвѣдей въ годъ, но шкуръ не продаютъ. Вообще, купля и продажа въ Абхазіи мѣновая, денегъ въ этомъ случаѣ не употребляютъ.

Главнымъ источникомъ прюпитанія абхазцевъ являются земледѣліе, скотоводство и, отчасти, пчеловодство. Въ предгорьяхъ абхазцы имѣютъ часто по 200 и болѣе ульевъ. Нынѣ абхазцы сѣютъ кукурузу и, изрѣдка, пшеницу. Нѣсколько лѣтъ назадъ, гоми (ґhоми) считался главнымъ и самымъ распространеннымъ хлѣбнымъ растеніемъ; но теперь кукуруза совсѣмъ вытѣснила его. Въ ограниченномъ количествѣ, для домашняго только употребленія, сѣютъ еще табакъ, хлопокъ, ленъ, пеньку и огородныя растенія.

Главное богатство абхазца составляетъ домашній скотъ; по мнѣнію абхазца, это—существенный рычагъ жизни человѣка, кормитель, взроститель и хранитель его. Въ представленіи абхазца жизнь безъ домашняго скота немыслима; можно еще кое-какъ обходиться безъ хлѣба, но безъ скота нельзя. Такое воззрѣніе особенно справедливо относительно пастуховъ, которые, можно ска-

I: Dzhanashvili R13 Abkhaz R13

зать, блаженствуютъ, почти исключительно питаясь мясомъ и молокомъ. Для прокормленія стада, нерѣдко даже въ двѣ-три головы скота, когда оканчивалась трава въ одномъ мѣстѣ, абхазецъ переселялся въ другое, гдѣ ея легче было достать, и переносилъ съ собой свою ԥһацха (плетенку-шалашъ). Такъ было до послѣдней войны, а послѣ нея главное вниманіе абхазцевъ было обращено на посѣвъ кукурузы, вывозъ которой увеличивается изо дня въ день.

Устройство абхазскаго дома, ԥһацха, незатѣйливо. По виду онъ бываетъ круглый или четыреугольный. Стѣнки ԥһацхи подымаются наклонно вверхъ и сплетаются тоненькими орѣховыми прутьями; на нихъ опирается конусообразная крыша; сверху, конусъ связанъ вѣтками лозняка или прутьями; жерди укрѣплены на столбикахъ (ԥсҳьдыԥҳо). Такое незатѣйливое строеніе покрывается папоротникомъ, камышомъ, или метлюкомъ (полевицей, пиреемъ, Agrot's vulgaris).

Другого рода ԥһацха, представляющая по формѣ неправильный четыреугольникъ, строится такъ. У дверей фасада вбиты въ землю два каштановые столбика такъ, что верхніе концы ихъ сходятся. Абхазцы называютъ ихъ амакратл-хква (ножницы). Въ сторонѣ, противоположной „ножницамъ", вбитъ столбъ; на „ножницы" и на этотъ столбъ перекинуто стропило, на которомъ держится крыша. Крыша у такой ԥһацхи бываетъ покатая и плоская. Такую ԥһацху можно строить какой угодно величины. Спереди ея дѣлаютъ сѣни, а сзади особое отдѣленіе, гдѣ складываютъ всякій скарбъ и зимою держатъ скотъ. Стѣнъ ԥһацхи не обмазываютъ ничѣмъ и только зимою изрѣдка обставляютъ папоротникомъ; поэтому, чрезъ стѣны легко проходитъ внутрь свѣтъ, а вмѣстѣ съ нимъ, холодъ и дождь.

Внутри дома, по серединѣ ԥһацхи, изъ глины или тесанаго камня устроенъ очагъ (ахуштаара). Надъ очагомъ, съ потолка, на обручахъ висятъ чугунные котлы, въ которыхъ варятъ пищу. Въ очагѣ абхазцы стараются поддерживать неугасимый огонь. Дымъ выходитъ черезъ крышу, но во время вѣтра кружится по комнатѣ; поэтому, вся ԥһацха, и особенно верхняя часть ея, закопчена сажей. По одну сторону ԥһацхи поставлена тахта, у очага стоитъ длинная и нѣсколько широкая скамья, которая подчасъ служитъ и тахтой. На тахтѣ сложены постельныя принадлежности; тутъ-же стоитъ сундукъ, въ которомъ хранятся необходимыя вещи. На стѣнѣ висятъ сѣдло, хлыстъ и часть ору-

жіе. Въ углу-же, у стѣны, находится посуда для приготовленія ṙhомы; тамъ-же висятъ корзинки для храненія провизіи, деревянныя или роговыя ложки, чашки, стоятъ подойники, корыта и пр. Тазы и кувшины попадаются рѣдко; вмѣсто кувшина, употребляютъ тыкву-горлянку. Ко всему этому надо добавить еще нѣкоторыя орудія, плоскій камень, употребляемый вмѣсто ступки, и точильный камень. Вотъ и вся домашняя обстановка абхазца съ среднимъ состояніемъ.

Большая четыреугольная пһацха служитъ главнымъ жилымъ домомъ, а конусообразная (х к в а ц у)—для помѣщенія новобрачныхъ. Бѣдные довольствуются и однимъ домикомъ.

Обыкновенной, повседневной пищей абхазца служатъ сыръ, хлѣбъ изъ кукурузы, ṙhоми и кислое молоко. Г һ о м и приготовляется съ сыромъ (а ə л а д ж), или съ молокомъ и сыромъ (а ч а м у х к у а). Зимою абхазецъ довольствуется вареннымъ мясомъ, причемъ предпочитаетъ мясо козла. Легко обходится безъ вина, лишьбы было кислое молоко. Раковъ абхазецъ ненавидитъ; прежде не любилъ также и рыбы, но нынѣ, мало по малу, привыкаетъ ее ѣсть; не ѣстъ и нѣкоторыхъ огородныхъ растеній, но любитъ пищу, приправленную горькими травами, перцемъ и пр. Для своихъ моленій абхазцы пекутъ конусообразные хлѣбы, которые потомъ варятся: постомъ—въ водѣ, а въ другое время—въ молокѣ. Эти хлѣбы называются а р ы а ж а.

Старшинство въ семьѣ абхазца строго почитается. Своему pater familias (а в н а і һ а б) подчиняются всѣ домочадцы. Въ семьѣ все дѣлается по его распоряженію и усмотрѣнію и только въ дѣлахъ, касающихся женщинъ, руководительницей является старшая въ семьѣ женщина (а в н а і һ а б а п һ с). Младшіе во всемъ дѣйствуютъ по указаніямъ старшихъ; но если младшій членъ семьи по уму и опытности превосходитъ старшаго, то фактически все совершается по его волѣ и указаніямъ.

Старшіе въ домѣ (мужчина и женщина) исполняютъ всѣ религіозные обряды и молитвы. Старшій въ фамиліи также является исполнителемъ всѣхъ фамильныхъ религіозныхъ обрядовъ. Сыновья съ большою любовью ухаживаютъ за своими престарѣлыми родителями; при жизни родителей они обыкновенно не отдѣляются. Если-же случается раздѣлъ, то родителямъ даютъ половину всего имущества. Если дѣлежъ происходитъ между сыновьями и матерью, то послѣдней, кромѣ ея приданаго, выдѣляется часть имущества, равная долѣ каждаго изъ братьевъ; затѣмъ, по своей

волѣ и желанію, она поселяется съ однимъ изъ сыновей. Старшему брату при раздѣлѣ назначается доля за старшинство (а і h а б ш а х у). Если имѣется много скота, то за старшинство удѣляется по одной головѣ отъ каждой породы, а если мало, то одна, самая лучшая. Меньшему брату тоже выдѣляется за меньшинство (э і ҕ б ш а х у). Послѣ выдѣла за старшинство и за меньшинство, все остальное по-ровну дѣлится между братьями; при этомъ домъ отца, дворъ и пр. достается меньшему брату. Сестры получаютъ меньше братьевъ.

Ласковый и привѣтливый въ обществѣ, абхазецъ является у себя дома довольно суровымъ, повелительнымъ и столь неразговорчивымъ, точно ему лѣнь или жаль проронить своимъ домашнимъ хоть одно слово ласки и привѣта. Абхазка пользуется большою свободой. У нея не меньше, чѣмъ у мужчины, дѣла. Такъ, она сама носитъ кукурузу на мельницу, а въ нѣкоторыхъ мѣстахъ сама и мелетъ ее на ручной мельницѣ. Во время лѣтнихъ работъ, съ мотыгой въ рукѣ, она работаетъ, вмѣстѣ съ мужчиной, въ кукурузникѣ. Жены лицъ высшихъ сословій трудятся не меньше мужей, за то и пользуются онѣ большей свободой и почетомъ, чѣмъ гдѣ либо.

Съ дѣтства и до старости женщину встрѣчаютъ съ почетомъ и уваженіемъ. Женщины посѣщаютъ общественныя сходки, бываютъ на оплакиваньяхъ, поминкахъ, въ собраніяхъ мужчинъ и танцуютъ съ ними. Бывали примѣры, когда въ ночныхъ похожденіяхъ женщина являлась предводительницей абраговъ. Она исполняетъ религіозныя требы и церемоніи. Но при всемъ этомъ требуется, чтобы абхазка была невинна, стыдлива и говорила предъ старшими мужчинами учтиво и вѣжливо.

Абхазкѣ,—если мужъ по неосновательной причинѣ разведется съ ней,—разрѣшено являться на сельскія сходки и защищать себя. И она умѣло пользуется этимъ правомъ: съ неменьшею, чѣмъ мужчина, рѣшимостью идетъ на сходку и съ большимъ краснорѣчіемъ защищаетъ себя. Если, по разнымъ обстоятельствамъ, мужъ можетъ развестись съ женою, то и послѣдней дано право также поступать съ мужемъ, когда и онъ провинится передъ ней.

III.

Воспитаніе.—Воспитываемый.—Воспитатели.

Когда высшее сословіе въ Абхазіи пользовалось силой и властью, положеніе низшаго сословія было чрезвычайно угне-

тенное, батони (господинъ, феодалъ) смотрѣлъ на своего подданнаго, за раба, какъ на вещь: смотря по обстоятельствамъ, онъ продавалъ его или закладывалъ. Впрочемъ, и послѣ уничтоженія рабства, положеніе крестьянства не улучшилось, такъ какъ дворянство вплоть до послѣдняго времени не переставало заниматься воровствомъ, грабежами и разбоями.

При такомъ положеніи вещей, крестьянству оставалось мириться съ феодализмомъ и стараться, гдѣ можно, пользоваться его покровительствомъ. Лучшимъ средствомъ для этого служилъ обычай усыновленія или воспитанія крестьянами сыновей аристократовъ. Благодаря этому обычаю, усиливались и сами аристократы, такъ какъ они пріобрѣтали чрезъ это въ крестьянахъ самыхъ вѣрныхъ себѣ сторонниковъ, а жены ихъ освобождались отъ тягостной обязанности воспитанія и кормленія собственныхъ своихъ дѣтей. Поэтому-то въ Абхазіи нѣтъ ни одного крестьянина, который не воспиталъ-бы одного или нѣсколькихъ князей и дворянъ; вслѣдствіе этого обычая, едва-ли наберется 1% дворянъ, вскормленныхъ грудью собственныхъ матерей.

Предъ наступленіемъ родовъ въ семьяхъ аристократовъ (дидэбули), къ беременной начинаютъ стекаться, съ одной стороны, родственницы и знакомыя, съ другой—будущія воспитательницы ожидаемаго ребенка, съ которыми приходятъ сюда мужья и родственницы, чтобы съ подобающей торжественностью вернуться въ свое селеніе съ новорожденнымъ младенцемъ-воспитанникомъ. При родахъ къ роженицѣ являются также сельскія дѣвушки, чтобы веселымъ пѣніемъ и повѣствованіемъ басенъ и сказокъ развлекать родильницу и облегчать предродовыя ея страданія. Мужъ въ это время отсутствуетъ. По обычаю страны, онъ не имѣетъ права находиться при родахъ жены и потому удаляется изъ дому. Надъ кроватью роженицы съ потолка подвѣшивается веревка, за которую она могла-бы хвататься при сильныхъ родовыхъ болѣхъ и спазмахъ. Ей неприлично доводить свои стоны и крики до слуха свекра и свекрови, она должна стойко выносить страданія, чтобы на всегда не потерять ихъ уваженія къ себѣ. Вотъ, наконецъ, она разрѣшилась. Рожденіе мальчика радуетъ мать больше, чѣмъ дѣвочки, такъ какъ это даетъ ей въ глазахъ общества больше уваженія и чести; но она не особенно печалится и рожденіемъ дочери, ибо это служитъ, все-таки, доказательствомъ ея небезплодности. Новорожденный переходитъ въ руки кормилицы (жены воспитателя), родственницы поздравляютъ роженицу съ благополуч-

l: Dzhanashvili R13 Abkhaz R13

нымъ исходомъ родовъ: мать тоже радуется, и болѣе всего, конечно, тому обстоятельству, что, съ переходомъ малютки на воспитаніе въ чужія руки, сама она скорѣе поправится и, свободная отъ ухода за нимъ, тѣмъ легче сохранитъ красоту и свѣжесть лица. Чрезъ нѣсколько дней возвращается мужъ и, въ свою очередь, поздравляетъ ее съ разрѣшеніемъ отъ бремени *).

Въ день, назначенный для отъѣзда кормилицы съ новорожденнымъ малюткою, родители устраиваютъ пиръ и дарятъ ей матерію на платье, бѣлье и всѣ принадлежности для колыбели ребенка, мѣдный котелокъ для обмыванія его и другія мелкія вещи.

Съ этого дня воспитательница получаетъ почетное имя а н а д з э э (кормилица, мать-кормилица), и не только сама она, но и мужъ ея—а б а д з э э (кормилецъ, отецъ-кормилецъ) пользуются всеобщимъ уваженіемъ: малютка, съ переходомъ въ домъ кормильца и кормилицы, признается воспитанникомъ (а х ы п ѣ а) той фамиліи, къ которой принадлежитъ кормилецъ.

Воспитатели подобающимъ образомъ лелѣятъ малютку, содержатъ его въ нѣгѣ и довольствѣ. Чрезъ 2—3 года, воспитывающагося приводятъ къ его родителямъ съ подарками, состоящими изъ одного или двухъ быковъ, козла, каплуновъ, вина, хлѣба и пр. Въ домѣ родителей ребенка опять устраивается пиръ, на который сзываются и сосѣди. Тутъ кормилицѣ и ея мужу оказываютъ всяческій почетъ. Воспитателямъ дается право первымъ вымывать руки, а при возвращеніи ихъ домой, родители ребенка должны посадить ихъ на лошадь, т. е. когда они садятся на лошадь, поддерживать стремена съ противоположной стороны. Воспитатели возвращаются домой съ малюткой, обремененные всевозможными подарками: животными, платьемъ и деньгами.

Воспитанникъ остается у воспитателей впродолженіи 8—9 лѣтъ, а затѣмъ его привозятъ къ настоящимъ родителямъ. Нечего и говорить, что дитя, проведя свои юные годы въ чужомъ домѣ, выросши тамъ и научившись ходить, говорить и любить кормилицу и окружавшую его среду, со вступленіемъ въ домъ своего отца съ трудомъ мирится съ новымъ положеніемъ—въ первое время домъ отца кажется ему чуть-ли не тюрьмою. По этой причинѣ ему позволяютъ чаще навѣщать своихъ воспитателей. Если же воспитанникъ—сирота, то до женитьбы онъ остается въ домѣ воспитателей, на ихъ попеченіи.

*) См. прекрасную статью „Абхазія" К. Мачавариани, въ газ. „Иверія" за 1884 г., № 275.

Воспитанникъ обязанъ защищать интересы своихъ воспитателей, т. е. той фамиліи, члены которой воспитали его. Онъ обязанъ, напр., розыскивать потерянную вещь его воспитателей, находить вора и взыскивать съ него и большой для него будетъ срамъ, если онъ не съумѣетъ этого сдѣлать. Точно также, если его воспитателей обидитъ кто нибудь и они, по слабости, не могутъ отплатить обидчику, то за нихъ долженъ заступиться ихъ воспитанникъ. Положимъ, напр., что какой нибудь князь побилъ крестьянина. Въ этомъ случаѣ, за обиду долженъ требовать воспитанникъ побитаго крестьянина и искать за нее не съ самого обидчика-князя, ибо его „кровь неравна крестьянской", а съ его воспитателя, крестьянина-же; ему-то и достается за оскорбленіе, нанесенное воспитателю другого князя. Если крестьянинъ-воспитатель замѣшанъ въ какомъ нибудь дѣлѣ, то князь-воспитанникъ старается, всѣми правдами и неправдами, выручить его изъ бѣды. Въ такихъ случаяхъ, если воспитанникъ самъ еще молодъ и не въ состояніи помочь своимъ воспитателямъ, то вмѣсто него дѣйствуютъ его родители.

Этимъ, однако, еще не завершается роль воспитанника по отношенію къ воспитателю. Въ радостяхъ и несчастіяхъ своего воспитателя, во всѣхъ мало-мальски серьезныхъ обстоятельствахъ его жизни, онъ является главнымъ дѣйствующимъ лицомъ. Такъ, когда умретъ сама кормилица его, ея мужъ или кто-либо изъ ихъ дѣтей, то онъ горько оплакиваетъ ихъ, надѣваетъ трауръ, отпускаетъ волосы, на свой счетъ покупаетъ гробъ и распоряжается порядкомъ и церемоніей оплакиванія и похоронъ усопшаго. При поминкахъ онъ доставляетъ барана или лошадь и опять-таки распоряжается всѣмъ. Воспитанникъ-же является главнымъ лицомъ и въ томъ случаѣ, когда сынъ его кормилицы похищаетъ себѣ въ жены дѣвушку: если родственники дѣвушки погонятся за похитителемъ, то князь-воспитанникъ дѣйствуетъ за него словомъ и оружіемъ и не уступаетъ похищенной дѣвушки; затѣмъ, до окончательнаго уляженія дѣла, онъ держитъ ее у себя, такъ какъ нападать на его домъ уже никто изъ родственниковъ похищенной не осмѣлится.

Если-же свадьба сына воспитателя, или его дочери происходитъ мирно, по добровольному соглашенію обѣихъ сторонъ, то и тутъ князь-воспитанникъ считается первымъ дружкомъ жениха, даритъ невѣстѣ деньги, лошадь и пр.

Въ свою очередь, и воспитатели не остаются въ долгу у воспитанника, котораго они называютъ своимъ солнцемъ, своею свя-

тынею, именемъ котораго клянутся. Они ежегодно доставляютъ ему подарки, къ рождеству: сыръ, каплуновъ, хлѣбъ; къ пасхѣ: барашка или козленка и „чумухквати". Подарки эти—необходимые внѣшніе знаки искренняго расположенія и дружбы со стороны меньшихъ (низшей братіи) къ старшимъ; съ прекращеніемъ ихъ, прерывается и взаимная дружба.

Сыновья кормилицы бываютъ обыкновенно закадычными друзьями и пособниками воспитанника въ его ночныхъ воровскихъ похожденіяхъ. По этому-то, князь или дворянинъ въ свои воровскія экспедиціи беретъ и сыновей кормилицы, зная, что они, въ нуждѣ, готовы пожертвовать за него и жизнью.

Когда умретъ воспитанникъ, то горе и печаль воспитателей безпредѣльны: къ его похоронамъ они доставляютъ саванъ и деньги: они-же приводятъ на поминки по усопшемъ одного или двухъ быковъ, барановъ и пр. При женитьбѣ воспитанника они оказываютъ ему всяческое содѣйствіе своимъ личнымъ трудомъ, также дарятъ ему откормленныхъ животныхъ, да и невѣстѣ его приносятъ подарки.

У абхазцевъ существуетъ и другой родъ воспитыванія: именно, въ воспитанники приглашается взрослый мужчина. Такого мужчину абхазскій крестьянинъ приглашаетъ къ себѣ словами: „Я желаю повести тебя въ мой домъ и, по состоянію своему, оказать тебѣ почетъ". Въ назначенный день приглашаемый отправляется въ домъ будущаго своего воспитателя и беретъ съ собою еще нѣсколько человѣкъ. Во время ужина, хозяинъ и его родственники становятся на колѣни предъ вступающимъ въ воспитанники и подаютъ ему стаканъ вина, затѣмъ встаютъ на ноги и одинъ изъ нихъ обращается къ нему съ слѣдующей рѣчью: „Съ этого дня мы считаемъ тебя вскормленнымъ грудью въ нашей семьѣ, мы одинаковаго съ тобой образа мыслей и не пожалѣемъ для тебя ничего; надѣемся, что и ты для насъ не поскупишься ничѣмъ; ты будешь пользоваться бо̀льшимъ, чѣмъ другіе воспитанники, почетомъ". Послѣ этого, ему подносятъ нѣсколько рублей и дарятъ что нибудь его сотоварищамъ (хаԿ). При передачѣ подарковъ говорятъ: „вадча энуп" (подарокъ тебѣ). Церемонія эта заканчивается слѣдующимъ образомъ: на постланномъ коврѣ ставятъ сундукъ, на него садится жена хозяина дома, т. е. будущая кормилица; ее окружаютъ женщины. Затѣмъ, чрезъ отворенныя двери, входитъ вступающій въ воспитанники и становится предъ возсѣдающей на сундукѣ хозяйкой, кланяется ей

и троекратно прикасается губами къ соску ея груди, или, какъ абхазцы говорятъ, „три раза кусаетъ сосцы"; послѣ каждаго раза онъ произноситъ: „съ этого дня ты—родная моя мать". И дѣйствительно, съ этого времени между ними устанавливаются совершенно такія-же взаимныя отношенія, какъ и въ первомъ случаѣ—полнаго воспитанія чужого ребенка. Нечего и говорить, что, кромѣ князей и дворянъ, крестьяне точно также воспитываютъ дѣтей духовныхъ лицъ, купцовъ и даже крестьянъ-же. Бываютъ случаи, когда и дворяне на тѣхъ-же основаніяхъ принимаютъ къ себѣ на воспитаніе сыновей сильныхъ и вліятельныхъ князей.

IV.

Женитьба.

Лѣтъ пятнадцать назадъ, женихъ обыкновенно похищалъ себѣ въ жены дѣвушку, т. е., безъ согласія родителей дѣвушки и ея самой, совершалъ на нее нападеніе, при содѣйствіи сверстниковъ, и уводилъ ее къ себѣ силою. Такіе случаи нынѣ рѣдки. Напротивъ, похищенія совершаются теперь, большею частью, съ согласія самой невѣсты, хотя нерѣдко и помимо воли ея родителей. Въ послѣднемъ случаѣ, избранная въ невѣсты приходитъ въ ночное время къ заранѣе условленному мѣсту, за нѣсколько верстъ отъ родительскаго дома. Туда-же прибываетъ женихъ съ сверстниками, на лошадяхъ. Она садится на особую, для нея приведенную, лошадь и затѣмъ вся кавалькада скачетъ обратно, въ домъ жениха или какого нибудь вліятельнаго лица. Никакая погоня не въ состояніи отнять невѣсты у похитителей, ибо они, въ случаѣ необходимости, готовы драться за нее до послѣдней капли крови. Вскорѣ послѣ похищенія, сама дѣвушка всенародно объявляетъ, что похищеніе совершилось по ея личному желанію и что она только и можетъ быть счастлива съ своимъ похитителемъ. Тутъ начинаются взаимные уговоры, и все кончается миромъ: зять приноситъ подарки матери и отцу невѣсты, и дѣло прекращается.

Нужно замѣтить, что абхазецъ никогда не похищаетъ дѣвушки изъ низшаго, чѣмъ самъ, званія. Это считалось-бы безчестіемъ для самого похитителя. Напротивъ, каждый старается похитить дѣвушку болѣе высшаго происхожденія или, по крайней мѣрѣ, равную ему самому. Сдѣлать дѣвушкѣ предложеніе и получить отъ нея или ея родителей отказъ считается кровнымъ оскорбленіемъ;

въ этомъ случаѣ, единственнымъ способомъ удовлетворенія оскорбленнаго самолюбія считается похищеніе. Обыкновенно-же переговоры о женитьбѣ въ Абхазіи ведутъ свахи или посредники. Если они доводятъ дѣло до благополучнаго исхода, то за свой трудъ получаютъ головы и шкуры зарѣзанныхъ на свадьбѣ воловъ. Какъ только состоится обоюдное согласіе сторонъ, женихъ и невѣста, обмѣнявшись подарками, назначаютъ день для свиданія.

Въ назначенное время женихъ съ дружками отправляется съ подарками въ домъ родителей невѣсты. Женихъ-князь иногда пригоняетъ до 20-30 лошадей, изъ которыхъ многія бываютъ осѣданы. Тутъ устраивается пиръ на счетъ жениха. Во время пиршества дружки жениха, съ одной стороны, и приглашенные родителями невѣсты, съ другой, всячески стараются превзойти другъ друга остротами, каламбурами, краснорѣчіемъ, количествомъ выпитаго вина, пѣніемъ и пр. На другой день дружки жениха получаютъ разные подарки, а женихъ коня, или деньги и оружіе. Затѣмъ дружки возвращаются, а зять остается въ домѣ родителей невѣсты со своимъ уполномоченнымъ (д а д а).

Но будущій зять чувствуетъ себя пока очень неловко. По обычаю страны, онъ не можетъ еще показываться родителямъ невѣсты и ихъ родственникамъ. Онъ окутанъ буркой, голова и лицо его обвязаны башлыкомъ, изъ-подъ котораго чуть видны только глаза. Въ первую ночь, во время пира, онъ скрывается гдѣ нибудь на дворѣ и ночуетъ въ сосѣднемъ домѣ. На другой-же день его насильно приводятъ въ домъ невѣсты. Но и тутъ онъ не смѣетъ садиться и молча стоитъ у дверей, предоставляя уполномоченному отвѣчать за себя. Вообще, молодому зятю не подобаетъ обѣдать съ тестемъ и тещей, а въ другое время—садиться съ ними за трапезу. Въ нѣкоторыхъ мѣстностяхъ мужъ и жена никогда не показываются имѣтѣ родителямъ жены. Это считается стыдомъ.

Невѣста поселяется въ маленькомъ домикѣ—а м h а р а, откуда не выходитъ до тѣхъ поръ, пока въ большомъ домѣ не устроятъ пира. Тогда ее ведутъ въ домъ, и одинъ изъ пожилыхъ друзей семейства или самъ отецъ продѣваетъ кусокъ печенки на вертелъ и начинаетъ молиться и высказывать пожеланія, чтобы предстоящая чета была счастлива, плодовита и пр.

Когда женихъ изъ дома родителей невѣсты возвращается въ домъ отца, онъ и тутъ не имѣетъ права показываться родителямъ и старшимъ родственникамъ. Это считается также непри-

личнымъ. Онъ является только послѣ пира, устроеннаго его отцомъ. Тутъ повторяются тѣ-же благословенія и пожеланія, какъ и при выводѣ невѣсты изъ ея аҧҳара, при чемъ онъ дѣлаетъ подарки своей матери, отцу, дядѣ, воспитателю и, вообще, всѣмъ старшимъ родственникамъ. Этотъ пиръ носитъ названіе аҧҳашарҳэ (доля стыда, устранитель стыда).

По изготовленіи приданаго, родители невѣсты приглашаютъ къ себѣ будущаго зятя, чтобы вручить ему свою дочь; въ назначенное время женихъ является за нею со своими дружками и съ ея подругами. Возвращаясь домой съ невѣстою, по дорогѣ поютъ свадебную пѣсню бэдиэра (счастіе), джигитуютъ на лошадяхъ, стрѣляютъ изъ пистолетовъ и проч. Приближаясь къ дому жениха, посылаютъ кого нибудь впередъ извѣстить его отца и мать о пріѣздѣ невѣсты. Такой вѣстникъ останавливается гдѣ нибудь у воротъ дома и молча дѣлаетъ изъ пистолета выстрѣлъ на воздухъ. Въ домѣ ему даютъ отвѣдать меду или сахару.

Тѣмъ временемъ свадебный поѣздъ достигаетъ дома. Тутъ дружки и подруги нѣкоторое время тѣшатся громаднымъ круглымъ просянымъ хлѣбомъ, перебрасывая его троекратно чрезъ невѣсту и домъ и разламывая его на кусочки, которые разбираются присутствующими. Послѣ этого невѣсту вводятъ въ домъ, въ дверяхъ котораго два человѣка держатъ скрещенныя надъ головами шашки. На порогѣ ей даютъ отвѣдать меду или сахару, приговаривая при этомъ: „да дастъ тебѣ Богъ такой-же сладкій языкъ“. Вошедшей въ домъ невѣстѣ даютъ въ руки чашку, наполненную зернами гоми, на которыя положено яйцо. Затѣмъ ее три раза обводятъ вокругъ очага, причемъ она разбрасываетъ зерна гоми. Посадивъ невѣсту, ей даютъ въ руки мальчика, какъ-бы въ предзнаменованіе того, что она то-же родитъ мальчика. Нѣсколько времени спустя, невѣсту вводятъ въ отдѣльный домикъ, аҧҳара, и тогда начинается настоящій свадебный пиръ.

На второй и въ слѣдующій затѣмъ дни приходятъ родственники, знакомятся съ невѣстою и подносятъ ей подарки каждый по своему состоянію. Когда хотятъ знакомиться съ невѣстой, то ея уполномоченная подруга (дадэ) приподнимаетъ съ ея лица покрывало, которымъ она закрыта; посѣтители привѣтствуютъ невѣсту, а она, не произнося ни слова, стоитъ прямо, спокойно, опустивъ глаза внизъ. Отвѣты даетъ, вмѣсто нея, ея подруга. По прошествіи-же достаточнаго времени послѣ свадьбы, на всякій

предлагаемый ей вопросъ она, вмѣсто „да“ и „нѣтъ“, киваетъ только головой.

Въ а м ѣ р а молодая остается нѣсколько мѣсяцевъ; потомъ ее приглашаютъ въ главный домъ, и съ этого времени на нее переходятъ всѣ заботы по семейству. Она старается угождать всегда свекрови и свекру и поступать по ихъ желаніямъ. Впродолженіи нѣсколькихъ мѣсяцевъ, она не говоритъ ни съ кѣмъ; потомъ начинаетъ говорить сначала съ меньшими домочадцами и сельчанами, а затѣмъ уже и со старшими; позже-же всѣхъ начинаетъ говорить со свекромъ и свекровью. Новую невѣстку всѣ односельчане величаютъ „нашею невѣсткой“; къ ней приносятъ разное шитье, которое она и исполняетъ безвозмездно.

Молодая чета, впродолженіи многихъ лѣтъ, вмѣстѣ не показывается родителямъ мужа: въ ихъ присутствіи, до самой смерти, они не могутъ вмѣстѣ обѣдать. Въ разговорѣ со старшими (будутъ-ли то родственники, или посторонніе) жена не можетъ сказать о мужѣ—„мой мужъ“, и мужъ о своей женѣ—„моя жена“. Невѣстка не можетъ садиться на ту скамью, на которой сидѣли свекоръ и свекровь. Жена никогда не можетъ назвать мужа своего по имени и въ необходимыхъ случаяхъ, вмѣсто этого, обходится мѣстоименіями: „ты“, „онъ“. Точно также она не называетъ по имени деверей, воспитателей мужа, членовъ семьи, старшихъ въ селеніи и проч. Мужъ-же не произноситъ только имени жены. Когда теща и тесть впервые посѣтятъ зятя, то онъ долженъ поднести имъ подарки, равно какъ и въ томъ случаѣ, когда самъ онъ съ женою первый разъ отправляется къ родителямъ жены.

V.

Оплакиваніе и похороны усопшихъ.

Абхазцы весьма сострадательны, вообще, къ больнымъ, а опасно больныхъ никогда не оставляютъ одинокими. Когда сельчане узнаютъ, что такой-то ихъ собратъ тяжко боленъ, то обязательно всѣ навѣщаютъ его, разспрашиваютъ о болѣзни, ободряютъ и стараются его развеселить. Навѣщаютъ больного не только родственники, но и всѣ прочіе сельчане, безъ различія званій и состояній. Къ больному обыкновенно приходятъ по вечерамъ и проводятъ около него цѣлую ночь, поютъ, пляшутъ или разсказываютъ сказки, отпускаютъ остроты и пр., съ цѣлью какъ ни-

будь развеселить больного и такъ или иначе облегчить его страданія. Больныхъ лечатъ домашними средствами, старушки-знахарки читаютъ надъ ними свои молитвы и пр.

Какъ только больной умретъ, женщины тотчасъ поднимаютъ оглушительный вой и потрясающій душу крикъ, при чемъ рвутъ на себѣ волосы, царапаютъ себѣ тѣло, бьютъ себя по лицу, по головѣ и проч. Между тѣмъ, собирается весь околотокъ; плачъ и рыданіе увеличиваются. Нѣкоторыя женщины, изъ близкой родни умершаго, начинаютъ побивать себя, ударяться головами обо что нибудь; другія-же стараются ихъ угомонить, успокоить. Но всѣ эти увѣщанія часто не дѣйствуютъ на вступленныхъ плакальщицъ, и онѣ, вслѣдствіе нанесенныхъ себѣ побоевъ по тѣлу и головѣ и ударовъ головою обо что-нибудь, сами падаютъ за-мертво. Когда, наконецъ, воцаряется тишина, устанавливается церемоніалъ похоронъ. Ближайшая родня шьетъ себѣ траурныя платья; посылаются гонцы съ извѣщеніями и приглашеніями къ родственникамъ, воспитателямъ, друзьямъ и знакомымъ умершаго; односельчане-же, и безъ приглашеній, обязаны придти на оплакиванье. Умершаго кладутъ въ гробъ. Позади гроба усаживаются женщины въ траурныхъ нарядахъ, босыя, съ разодранными платьями, до-крови исцарапанными лицами и распущенными волосами. Съ другой стороны, къ гробу подходятъ плакальщики и плакальщицы. Самый порядокъ оплакиванья таковъ. Идутъ, положимъ, для оплакиванья усопшаго 4—5 женщинъ. Какъ только онѣ вступятъ во дворъ, тотчасъ-же начинаютъ плакать и кричать „авав", при чемъ прикладываютъ пальцы къ вискамъ и, пока не окончатъ своего „авав", бороздятъ ими лицо до подбородка. На ихъ „авав" сидящія у гроба женщины отвѣчаютъ такимъ-же возгласомъ. Плакальщицы медленно приближаются къ дому. Вой и рыданія ихъ, мало по малу, усиливаются, затѣмъ онѣ заходятъ въ домъ, гдѣ уже происходитъ настоящее общее оплакиванье. Плакальщицы-же, ударяя себя по лбу и въ грудь, заходятъ въ домъ, становятся предъ гробомъ на колѣни и оплакиваютъ такъ усопшаго.

Въ другомъ отдѣленіи дома выставлены вещи усопшаго, его платье и оружіе. Послѣ оплакиванья усопшаго, плачъ и рыданіе происходятъ и надъ его вещами.

Соболѣзнованіе роднымъ усопшаго высказывается посѣтителями въ слѣдующей формѣ: „Пусть-бы не случилось этого съ вами; пусть-бы вы услышали, вмѣсто этого, о моей смерти..." и т. д.

Кормилица умершаго или ея дѣти, приходя на оплакиваніе воспитанника, еще за версту отъ дома подымаютъ вой и крикъ. Въ дворѣ ихъ встрѣчаютъ нарочно поставленные люди, которые вводятъ ихъ подъ руку въ домъ. Это не мѣшаетъ вновь прибывшимъ на ходу до-крови исцарапывать себѣ щеки и шею, биться головами объ столбы дома, пока онѣ, полумертвыя, не опустятся предъ гробомъ, обливаясь слезами. Воспитатель и его дѣти также бичуютъ себя по головѣ и лицу.

Въ день похоронъ оплакиванье усопшаго бываетъ всеобщее. Затѣмъ, послѣ оплакиванья, устраивается тризна и угощаются всѣ посѣтители хлѣбомъ, виномъ и постными яствами, а къ вечеру уже хоронятъ усопшаго.

Необходимо отмѣтить еще одну характерную черту. Когда умираетъ глава семьи и печальное шествіе съ его останками уже тронулось къ кладбищу,—то чрезъ его домъ перекидывается веревка, которую держатъ за концы два человѣка и тянутъ то въ одну, то въ другую сторону. Смыслъ этого оригинальнаго обычая, распространеннаго и въ Мингреліи, таковъ: со смертью главы семьи и выносомъ его на кладбище, домъ начинаетъ расшатываться и грозитъ рухнуть, и чтобы это отвратить, прибѣгаютъ къ веревкѣ. Послѣ выноса тѣла, когда домъ остается цѣлъ и невредимъ, дѣлаютъ ружейный выстрѣлъ въ знакъ радости.

Могилы для мужчинъ роютъ глубиною до поясницы, а для женщинъ еще глубже, такъ какъ, по мнѣнію нѣкоторой части абхазцевъ, женщина вообще хитра и лукава (наіваи), и абхазская поговорка утверждаетъ: „что имѣешь на умѣ, не сообщай женѣ, иначе она изъ могилы выползетъ и разгласитъ твою тайну". Поэтому усопшую хоронятъ глубже и насыпаютъ на нее больше земли.

Уложивъ усопшаго въ могилу, эту послѣднюю обставляютъ деревянными досками, а потомъ сверху засыпаютъ землею.

У абхазцевъ спеціальныхъ кладбищъ не имѣется. Каждая фамилія имѣетъ свое особое кладбище. Чаще для кладбищъ служатъ высокія и горныя мѣста, гдѣ проходитъ общая дорога. Туристъ или путешественникъ легко замѣтитъ, что въ Абхазіи самыя лучшія и поэтическія мѣста заняты кладбищами.

Заботы объ усопшемъ продолжаются еще долго послѣ его похоронъ. Мать и жена умершаго, кормилица или ея дочери, одѣтыя въ трауръ, на босую ногу, каждый день, по утрамъ и вечерамъ, посѣщаютъ свѣжую могилу, горько оплакиваютъ усопшаго

и просятъ его помочь имъ въ разныхъ житейскихъ заботахъ, ходатайствовать за нихъ предъ другими усопшими, передать имъ поклонъ отъ нихъ и пр. Такъ продолжается до 40 дней или до „субботнихъ поминокъ". До этого-же времени въ домѣ бываютъ выставлены вещи усопшаго и вновь прибывающіе оплакиватели сначала плачутъ надъ этими вещами, а потомъ и надъ могилой. Также до этого времени, и часто впродолженіи цѣлаго года, при всякомъ завтракѣ и ужинѣ, на столъ кладется и доля усопшаго.

На сороковой день или въ одну изъ субботъ устраиваютъ поминки по усопшемъ. Рѣжутъ барана и приготовляютъ скоромныя блюда. Родственники усопшаго, которые постились до сихъ поръ, только въ этотъ день разговляются. Впрочемъ, мать и кормилица постятся цѣлый годъ.

Вторыя поминки сопряжены еще съ большими расходами. Эти поминки называются апhсхувра (აფსხევრა *). Рѣжутъ при этомъ животныхъ, тратятъ много и стараются, по возможности, удовлетворить душу усопшаго. Абхазцы увѣрены, что неудовлетворенная душа можетъ повредить не только ихъ имуществу, но и имъ самимъ. Эти поминки устраиваются на второй годъ по смерти усопшаго, чаще осенью, когда всего имѣется въ изобиліи.

Ко дню апhсхувра созываются гости для оплакиванья усопшаго. Иногда въ этотъ-же день въ честь умершаго устраивается и марула (скачки). Если скачки назначены заранѣе, то объ этомъ своевременно сообщается всѣмъ чрезъ нарочныхъ. Между тѣмъ, хозяева заготовляютъ обильные запасы провизіи животными, виномъ, сыромъ, хлѣбомъ и пр. Накачунѣ апhсхувра выставляютъ вещи умершаго, и тутъ-же привязываютъ коня усопшаго, съ траурной попоной. На сѣдлѣ коня вѣшаютъ оружіе усопшаго: ружье, постолетъ, кинжалъ, шашку, кнутъ и пр.; затѣмъ происходитъ оплакиванье надъ могилой и останками.

А вотъ и эта картина. Стоитъ толпа людей обоего пола, босыхъ, одѣтыхъ въ трауръ. Волосы у мужчинъ заплетены въ косы, какъ у женщинъ. Къ нимъ направляются пѣшіе и конные, причемъ ведутъ по одному или по два быка, по нѣскольку барановъ и, вообще, кто что можетъ, и несутъ разныя сладости, приготовленныя на маслѣ и на меду, также мацони (кислое

---

*) апhс—душа, ху—доля, порядокъ, вра—дѣлать, совершать, т. е. совершеніе поминокъ въ честь души усопшаго.

молоко) и пр. Одинъ изъ идущихъ держитъ въ рукѣ вѣтвистую, деревообразную свѣчу, на которой укрѣпленъ лоскутокъ миткаля зеленаго цвѣта, пропитанный воскомъ. На вершинахъ вѣтокъ и вѣточекъ навѣшаны такіе-же лоскутки, колеблемые вѣтромъ, подобно листьямъ дерева. (Если шествіе происходитъ ночью, то къ вѣтвеобразной свѣчѣ прикрѣпляютъ нѣсколько зажженныхъ свѣчекъ, также, какъ и къ рогамъ быковъ). Печальная процессія медленно приближается къ дому и входитъ во дворъ, гдѣ ее встрѣчаютъ другіе. Тутъ происходитъ рыданіе и плачъ, отдѣльно женщинъ и мужчинъ. Послѣ этого рѣжутъ быковъ и барановъ, при чемъ каждый разъ приговариваютъ: „приносится душѣ твоей".

На другой день, т. е. въ день апѣсхувра, собирается множество народа. Къ полудню одинъ изъ родственниковъ усопшаго отвязываетъ его коня и становится посреди поляны, а возлѣ него устанавливаются въ кругъ женщины и мужчины. Затѣмъ конь троекратно обводится въ кругу; за конемъ слѣдуетъ ближайшая родня усопшаго, въ траурѣ, съ обнаженными головами и босыми ногами, горько рыдая. Мужчины ударяютъ себя въ грудь и лицо. Женщины, стоящія въ кругу, раздѣлившись на двѣ партіи, поперемѣнно возглашаютъ „авав". Эта церемонія оканчивается выведеніемъ коня изъ круга; съ этого времени считаются уничтоженными всякіе земные знаки (останки) усопшаго, до того-же и самъ усопшій признавался невидимо присутствующимъ тутъ, среди собранія.

Послѣ этого гости садятся обѣдать. Для нихъ на полянѣ, подъ открытымъ небомъ, накрыта длинная скатерть и приготовлены различныя яства. Особенное вниманіе обращаютъ на себя сдѣланныя изъ сыра ложки, чашки, стаканы, наперстки и пр. Тутъ-же ставятся вышеописанныя свѣчи.

Слѣдуетъ замѣтить, что хотя это угощеніе стоитъ чрезвычайно дорого, но оно необременительно для хозяевъ, потому что въ расходахъ принимаютъ участіе не только родственники, но и цѣлое селеніе, въ которомъ устраивается такая тризна.

Послѣ обѣда происходитъ **джирити**, напоминающій турниры среднихъ вѣковъ. Вотъ прекрасный полъ занялъ сѣни дома. Молодые конные парни собрались предъ красавицами и въ рѣчахъ на-перерывъ стараются выказать остроуміе, находчивость и знаніе, а въ предстоящей джигитовкѣ—свою храбрость.

Главная джигитовка, **тарчэя** (თარჩეი), состоитъ въ слѣдующемъ. Одинъ изъ состязающихся всадниковъ беретъ у хозяина пира

или у какой нибудь красавицы лоскутки ситца, сшитый сапожокъ, четки изъ каштановъ, или что нибудь другое и, держа въ рукѣ этотъ тарчэй, скачетъ съ нимъ впередъ, а другіе парни за нимъ въ догонку и стараются его поймать и отнять тарчэй. Если это удается, то тарчэй переходитъ въ руки того, кто отнялъ его у перваго всадника: теперь скачетъ этотъ, а другіе снова несутся за нимъ въ догонку. Побѣдителемъ остается тотъ, кого не съумѣютъ изловить и кто довезетъ тарчэй до мѣста, откуда началось состязаніе. Состязаніе наѣздниковъ этимъ, однако, еще не заканчивается: они продолжаютъ гарцовать на лошадяхъ, поднимаютъ на всемъ скаку, съ земли, деньги и пр.

На поминкахъ устраиваются иногда и состязанія въ скачкѣ. Наѣздниками являются дѣти 8—9 лѣтъ. Для состязающихся назначается мѣсто, и кто первый къ нему прискачетъ, выигрываетъ что нибудь. Въ этомъ случаѣ, хозяева дарятъ побѣдителямъ коня усопшаго, какое нибудь животное, или хак (аршинъ или же пядь) ситца.

VI.

Религіозныя вѣрованія абхазцевъ.

„До 1867 года, говоритъ г. А. въ своей прекрасной статьѣ объ Абхазіи, религіозное состояніе абхазцевъ представляло полнѣйшій сумбуръ. Здѣсь можно было встрѣтить обряды всѣхъ вѣроученій, начиная отъ фетишизма до христіанства. Точнаго понятія народъ не имѣлъ ни объ одной религіи, а усвоилъ себѣ отъ каждой изъ нихъ то, что выдавалось болѣе рельефно и сильнѣе дѣйствовало на его почти дѣтское воображеніе“ *). Г.-же Гіоргидзе говоритъ: „Нынѣ большинство абхазцевъ исповѣдуетъ христіанскую вѣру, а меньшинство—магометанскую. Но, несмотря на это, абхазецъ мало свѣдущъ и въ той и въ другой религіи и скорѣе онъ—язычникъ, чѣмъ христіанинъ или магометанинъ“ **).

1.

Души усопшихъ —Ихъ странствія по землѣ.

Абхазецъ вѣритъ, что человѣческая жизнь не кончается земнымъ существованіемъ и что она продолжается и за гробомъ,

*) См. Сборн. свѣд. о кавк. горц., вып. V.
**) Иверія за 1888 г.

или, говоря словами абхазца, „на той сторонѣ". Онъ также вѣритъ, что эта загробная жизнь продолжается на томъ именно мѣстѣ, гдѣ похороненъ усопшій. Поэтому-то недостаточно, напр., достать изъ воды трупъ утопленника и предать его землѣ, но должно изъ воды вызвать и душу его и впустить ее въ ту могилу, въ которой зарытъ трупъ утопленника. Вотъ какъ совершается церемоніалъ вызова и изловленія души утопленника. На обоихъ берегахъ рѣки, откуда вытащенъ былъ трупъ утопленника, собираются мужчины и женщины. Надъ рѣкой, съ одного берега до другого, перекидываютъ шелковую нитку; на ней вѣшаютъ кожаную котомку, которая нижнимъ концомъ чуть касается поверхности рѣчной воды. Собравшіеся мужчины и женщины начинаютъ подпѣвать подъ звуки балалайки. Абхазецъ увѣренъ, что душа утопленника, заслышавъ звуки балалайки и пѣніе, выходитъ изъ воды и входитъ въ котомку. Когда, по мнѣнію абхазца, она находится уже въ котомкѣ, онъ бросается въ воду и завязываетъ котомку. Затѣмъ, съ ликованіями, доставляютъ котомку на кладбище, гдѣ чрезъ просверленное въ ней отверстіе впускаютъ изловленную душу въ могилу утопленника.

Усопшіе въ Абхазіи пользуются большимъ почетомъ. Кладбища, какъ мы уже сказали, бываютъ на высокихъ живописныхъ мѣстахъ и обводятся заборами. Надъ могилами строятся крытые крыши дома, какихъ абхазцы, вообще, себѣ не строятъ. У могилъ сажаютъ разныя плодовыя деревья: яблони, груши, персиковыя, айвовыя и пр.; на самыхъ-же могилахъ кладутъ ломти дыни, арбуза, огурцы и пр. Все это, опять-таки, служитъ подтвержденіемъ того повѣрья, что въ загробной жизни души усопшихъ также, какъ живые люди, нуждаются въ ѣдѣ, питьѣ, жилищахъ и пр.

И дѣйствительно, абхазецъ, положивши, напр., кусокъ дыни на могилѣ усопшаго, увѣренъ, что онъ имъ полакомится. Благодаря такому повѣрью, впродолженіи почти цѣлаго года по смерти усопшаго, за каждымъ обѣдомъ и ужиномъ кладется на столѣ особая доля для умершаго, совершаются поминки по немъ и пр. Кромѣ этого, поминки по недавно умершимъ бываютъ ежегодно наканунѣ родительской субботы, а въ самую родительскую субботу поминки по преждеумершимъ. Глава семьи, при убоѣ жертвеннаго животнаго, возглашаетъ: „Если существуетъ загробная жизнь, приносится (жертва) для твоей души". Затѣмъ, когда яства приготовлены и положены на скатерть, тотъ-же глава семьи, становясь предъ скатертью, опять возглашаетъ: „Усопшіе,

благодать вашихъ душъ даруйте намъ! не повредите насъ смертью (умерщвленіемъ)! прибавляйте (размножайте) насъ, вашъ скотъ! не лишите насъ вашей защиты и покрова!" и пр. По окончаніи этого возгласа, желѣзнымъ вертеломъ, надъ скатертью, въ воздухѣ, онъ дѣлаетъ крестное знаменіе и причитываетъ: „Все это, пріуготовленное силою огня и воды, если вправду существуетъ загробная жизнь, жертвуется душамъ вашимъ". Сказавъ это, глава семьи беретъ стаканъ вина и выпиваетъ; послѣ этого, въ ломоть гоми всовываетъ кусочки сердца и печенки жертвеннаго животнаго, возливаетъ на него немного вина и выбрасываетъ ломоть на дворъ, при словахъ: „А это вамъ, душамъ-проводникамъ и сопровождающимъ". Изъ этого видно, что живыхъ сородичей, по религіознымъ представленіямъ абхазцевъ, посѣщаютъ души усопшихъ, вмѣстѣ съ прочими душами, сопровождающими ихъ. И абхазецъ увѣренъ, что чѣмъ онѣ (души усопшихъ) пышнѣе будутъ встрѣчены и угощены, тѣмъ довольнѣе и благодарнѣе останутся и тѣмъ больше содѣйствія и покровительства окажутъ онѣ живымъ.—въ противномъ-же случаѣ, онѣ будутъ только вредить имъ. Души, оставшіяся довольными пріемомъ, по возвращеніи къ душамъ другихъ умершихъ сородичей, высказываютъ имъ свою радость и хвалятся, съ какими большими почестями приняли ихъ; недовольныя-же возвращаются чрезвычайно огорченными, и когда другія души ихъ разспрашиваютъ объ оказанномъ имъ пріемѣ, то отвѣчаютъ: „Что-жь бы мы у нихъ нашли, когда и сами они, оказывается, такіе-же мертвецы, какъ и мы". Въ этомъ случаѣ, по вѣрованію абхазца, жертвами страшнѣйшаго гнѣва неудовлетворенныхъ душъ усопшихъ обязательно дѣлаются нѣсколько членовъ семьи, не съумѣвшей должнымъ образомъ угостить души своихъ усопшихъ родичей.

Абхазцы твердо убѣждены, что души усопшихъ выходятъ изъ могилъ и посѣщаютъ своихъ живыхъ сородичей. Онѣ становятся возлѣ домовъ и свистятъ, ихъ задабриваютъ возліяніемъ вина или выбрасываніемъ чего нибудь. Души усопшихъ, особенно по ночамъ, любятъ выходить изъ могилъ, становятся у дороги и, когда увидятъ путника, бѣгутъ за нимъ въ догонку. Послушаемъ, какъ разсказываютъ сами абхазцы о важномъ значеніи поминокъ.

1. „Сесрква былъ извѣстный храбрецъ. При одномъ набѣгѣ, онъ лишился въ схваткѣ всѣхъ своихъ ста сотоварищей: всѣхъ ихъ перебили. Сесрква зарѣзалъ множество быковъ, барановъ и устроилъ поминки по сотоварищамъ. Затѣмъ онъ и самъ былъ

убитъ въ какой-то стычкѣ и неизвѣстно гдѣ похороненъ. Его другъ изъявилъ однажды желаніе отыскать могилу Сесрквы и оплакать его. Послѣ долгихъ поисковъ, наконецъ, онъ нашелъ ее, оплакалъ Сесрку, и такъ какъ до селенія было далеко, а время было позднее, то онъ рѣшился тутъ-же заночевать. Привязавъ лошадь къ дереву, онъ прилегъ подъ дубомъ и скоро заснулъ. Во снѣ ему снится, что всѣ убитыхъ молодцовъ Сесрквы въ загробной жизни находятся въ прекрасномъ положеніи: они довольны всѣмъ, ибо и гостей съ почетомъ принимаютъ, и лошадей своихъ хорошо кормятъ; Сесрква-же и его лошадь скитаются голодные и питаются только подаяніями тѣхъ ста молодцовъ. Увидѣвъ героя Сесрку въ такомъ положеніи, другъ спрашиваетъ его: „Сесрква! ты превосходилъ всѣхъ на бѣломъ свѣтѣ; что-же такое приключилось съ тобою въ загробной жизни, что ты не можешь принять даже и одного гостя?“ Сесрква отвѣчаетъ: „Какъ мнѣ принимать гостей, когда я и самъ-то для себя и лошади выпрашиваю у другихъ!“. Проснувшись, другъ догадался, что Сесрква по сію пору остается безъ поминокъ, и вотъ онъ немедленно-же устраиваетъ ему богатыя поминки. И еще разъ снится ему сонъ: Сесрква теперь въ такомъ-же прекрасномъ положеніи, какъ и сто его сподвижниковъ, и въ состояніи принимать гостей“.

2. „Шли два человѣка; у одного изъ нихъ въ котомкѣ припрятанъ былъ жирный рѣзаный козелъ, со снятой шкурой. Вечернею порой кто-то сталъ ихъ преслѣдовать, посвистывая на бѣгу. Тогда человѣкъ съ ношей обратился къ нему и сказалъ: „Отстань, чего ты хочешь отъ меня?“ Сказавъ это, опять продолжалъ путь, но привидѣніе не отставало. Товарищъ догадался, въ чемъ дѣло, и посовѣтовалъ другому отрѣзать кусокъ мяса и бросить привидѣнію. Совѣтъ принятъ, кусокъ мяса брошенъ,—свистъ и преслѣдованіе тотчасъ-же прекратились“.

3. „Мокицы ежегодно устраивали поминки по своимъ усопшимъ, похороненнымъ въ верхней части кладбища, а моквульцы этого не дѣлали для своихъ усопшихъ, погребенныхъ въ нижней части. Поэтому, мокицкіе усопшіе съ насмѣшкой кричали моквульскимъ: „Ничего не находящіе!“ а тѣ имъ отвѣчали на это: „Когда наши сородичи найдутъ что нибудь для себя, такъ и намъ отъ нихъ перепадетъ“. Эти усопшіе собирались вмѣстѣ по ночамъ и устраивали танцы на а п ѣ с ц а р к в а ш а р т ѣ а (мѣсто для танцевъ умершихъ). Слѣды ногъ танцующихъ душъ могъ видѣть всякій“.

Души, какъ умершихъ, такъ и живыхъ людей, особенно-же вѣдьмъ, способны, по временамъ, совершать странствія съ злыми цѣлями, напр. высасывать молоко изъ сосцовъ, вынимать изъ груди сердце и печень и пр. Вѣдьмъ даже и водная стихія не принимаетъ, онѣ не тонутъ въ водѣ. Онѣ имѣютъ своего начальника Роскини, который живетъ на вершинѣ горы Табакона. По степени своего могущества, онѣ раздѣлены на группы: младшія изъ нихъ обыкновенно путешествуютъ на мышахъ, лягушкахъ, кошкахъ и проч., а старшія—на лисицахъ, волкахъ и т. д. Наканунѣ Успенія всѣ онѣ обязаны собираться на Табакона для ежегоднаго отчета своему властелину Роскини о своихъ дѣйствіяхъ и представлять ему вещественныя доказательства своей исправной службы: вынутое ими сердце человѣка, или животнаго, печень, глаза, ногти, волосы и пр. Чтобы избѣжать нападенія вѣдьмъ, абхазцы принимаютъ такія мѣры: во время Успенскаго поста ставятъ кресты, втыкаютъ себѣ въ волосы свѣчи, а наканунѣ Успенія стрѣляютъ изъ ружей, поютъ и цѣлую ночь проводятъ въ бдѣніи. Абхазецъ увѣренъ, что вѣдьма одновременно можетъ находиться у себя дома, между людьми, и на вершинѣ горы Табакона. Подобное раздвоеніе человѣка абхазцы объясняютъ тѣмъ, что странствуетъ не сама вѣдьма, а ея побочная душа (а п ҳ с ч ч д а=лишняя душа).

2.

Истинный Богъ.—Язычество.—Главные и второстепенные боги абхазцевъ.—Причины политеизма.—„Творцы" и „выковыватели".—Рокъ или предопредѣленіе.

Въ помощь верховному существу, говоритъ г. А-ъ, надѣленному всѣми качествами, которыми, по нашимъ представленіямъ, одаренъ Богъ, миѳологія абхазцевъ придала множество другихъ божествъ, опредѣливъ каждому изъ нихъ его спеціальное назначеніе. Эти подручныя божества, по ихъ понятію, созданы Всевышнимъ прежде человѣка и вселенной, и молящійся, чрезъ ихъ посредство, обращается къ самому Богу. Самъ Богъ никогда не сходитъ на землю, но если ему нужно кого либо наказать или ниспослать на кого нибудь свою милость, то онъ посылаетъ одного изъ своихъ помощниковъ. Въ молитвахъ, которыя произносятся и поются при жертвоприношеніяхъ и другихъ религіозныхъ обрядахъ абхазцы взываютъ къ богу: а х д а у (илианца-дауква)

злыпха-ххэура, что значитъ: Боже великій, милосердый, многомилостивый.

Кромѣ этого многомилостиваго бога, у абхазцевъ, какъ мы сказали, существуютъ еще другіе, второстепенные боги, необходимость созданія которыхъ вызывалась потребностями народа. Всякое атмосферическое явленіе, всякая опасность, угрожающая человѣку или его достоянію, всякій трудъ, обезпечивающій существованіе человѣка, создали въ дѣтскомъ воображеніи народа отдѣльныхъ, невидимо управляющихъ всѣмъ, покровителей. Божества эти не имѣютъ никакихъ изображеній, такъ какъ представляются въ различной формѣ, сообразной съ обстоятельствами, но тѣмъ не менѣе бытіе ихъ, по понятію абхазцевъ, несомнѣнно, ибо ощущается на всемъ хорошемъ и дурномъ, что только случается въ жизни человѣка. Каждый шагъ человѣка находится подъ ихъ контролемъ и всякое совращеніе съ истиннаго пути немедленно вызываетъ съ ихъ стороны наказаніе.

Нѣтъ сомнѣнія, что въ развитіи религіозныхъ идей и тенстическихъ образовъ у абхазскаго народа, какъ это доказано наукой на множествѣ аналогичныхъ примѣровъ у другихъ первобытныхъ народовъ, громадную роль играли окружающая природа и ея явленія. На его младенческій умъ и воображеніе несомнѣнно сильное воздѣйствіе производило и лазуревое небо, необъятнымъ сводомъ опирающееся на землю и то грозно-сурово выглядывающее на нее изъ-за тучъ, то улыбающееся ей своими огненными глазами: днемъ—солнцемъ, а ночью—луною и звѣздами; вліяла на нихъ и сама мать-земля, ибо она, во-истину, есть мать, кормилица, производительница и источникъ благъ и изобилія; не оставались безъ вліянія на этотъ младенческій умъ солнце, этотъ „глазъ неба", согрѣвающее и оживотворяющее весь міръ; „стражъ ночи"—луна, незамѣтно плывущая по своду неба и побѣждающая ночную тьму; грозный громовой ударъ, наводящій страхъ и уничтожающій все по пути; воздухъ, то привѣтливо-тихій и спокойный, то грозно несущійся и воющій; разноцвѣтная, красивая радуга—этотъ „поясъ" неба; утренняя заря, эти „двери дня"... Все это и многое другое, конечно, сильно дѣйствовало на человѣка въ дѣтскомъ его возрастѣ, и немудрено, что абхазецъ все это, вмѣстѣ съ деревьями, лѣсами, полями и пр., олицетворяетъ и обоготворяетъ; обоготворяетъ нѣкоторыя существа за то, что они приносятъ ему пользу, а другія за то, что причиняютъ ему вредъ. Сообразно этому, миѳологія абхазца для каждаго рода дѣ-

ятельности и энергіи человѣка,—сельское-ли это хозяйство или промышленность, искусство или пастушество и пр.,—создала спеціальныя божества-покровителей. Такими являются, напр., Аитһар—покровитель скота, Джаджа--богъ посѣвовъ, Шаша—богъ кузнечнаго дѣла и др. Многіе изъ этихъ божествъ—женскаго рода; напр., покровительница водной стихіи. „мать воды"—женщина; самая земля олицетворена въ женскомъ родѣ; имѣется также „госпожа вѣтеръ"; предокъ скота—женскаго рода, предокъ козъ—тоже: богъ посѣвовъ—Джаджа и др.—также женскаго рода.

Кромѣ этихъ боговъ, имѣются еще Ашаца—чаиһаца, боги „творцы" и „выковыватели". Ихъ бываетъ или два, или множество. Подъ воздѣйствіемъ христіанства, они представляются въ видѣ ангеловъ. Чрезъ Ашаца-чаиһаца рождается „всякая душа" Новорожденному они опредѣляютъ его будущее, его счастіе и несчастіе, долготу жизни и часъ смерти и обо всемъ этомъ дѣлаютъ ему надпись на лбу (лахинʒара). Абхазецъ увѣренъ въ существованіи такихъ надписей на лбу человѣка и, по его убѣжденію, въ этомъ всякій можетъ увѣриться собственными глазами. Приведемъ, кстати, одинъ абхазскій разсказъ, иллюстрирующій неминуемость предопредѣленія, рока.

Въ ночной часъ два человѣка отправились на воровство. По пути ихъ застигъ сильный дождь. Они укрылись въ сѣняхъ хаты поселянина. Заглянувъ внутрь хаты, они увидѣли собравшихся женщинъ и роженицу, которая, вслѣдъ за тѣмъ, вскорѣ и родила дѣвочку. „Творцы" и „выковыватели" не замедлили явиться сюда. Одинъ изъ нихъ сказалъ: „Да будетъ новорожденная женою того изъ двухъ воровъ, который снаружи заглядываетъ въ домъ. Да будетъ это его предопредѣленіемъ". Второй изъ „творцовъ-выковывателей" подтвердилъ слова перваго. Воръ былъ уже въ среднихъ лѣтахъ, и, услышавъ это, онъ сказалъ: „Я ужъ и теперь не молодъ, а она только-что родилась; да избавитъ меня богъ отъ такой женитьбы". И вотъ онъ задумалъ убить новорожденнаго малютку: когда всѣ уснули въ домѣ, онъ тихо пробрался въ хату, взялъ ребенка, вышелъ на дворъ и, распоровъ ему животъ, забросилъ его на плоскую крышу хаты; затѣмъ оба они пошли своей дорогой. Плачъ ребенка разбудилъ женщинъ. Онѣ отыскали его, зашили шелковой ниткой рану и, такимъ образомъ, спасли его отъ смерти. Какъ ни старался жениться тотъ воръ, которому сдѣлано было вышеприведенное предопредѣленіе, ему не

удавалось этого сдѣлать. Тѣмъ временемъ и дѣвочка, которую онъ считалъ умершею, достигла возраста замужества и, какъ то разъ, повстрѣчалась съ воромъ; онъ съ перваго-же раза влюбился въ нее и женился. Тутъ-то и обнаружилось, какъ неотложно исполняется всякое предопредѣленіе и рѣшеніе „творцовъ-выковывателей".

VII.

Моленія въ честь божествъ.

Моленіями называются тѣ религіозные обряды и церемоніи, которые, сопровождаясь жертвоприношеніями въ честь боговъ, совершаются по извѣстному, издревле освященному и установленному, порядку.

Каждое божество, въ сферѣ своей дѣятельности, можетъ самостоятельно проявлять милость и гнѣвъ къ человѣку, напр. насылать на него самого или его скотъ болѣзни, несчастія и пр. Факты прогнѣвленія божествъ отступленіями отъ установленнаго порядка религіозной обрядности абхазцы легко устанавливаютъ по особымъ примѣтамъ. Для отвращенія гнѣва божествъ за упущенія въ молитвахъ и при жертвоприношеніяхъ надо повторить приношенія и восполнить то, что упущено; неисправленныя ошибки и упущенія въ обрядности ложатся тяжкою виною предъ прогнѣвленнымъ божествомъ даже на отдаленнѣйшія поколѣнія прогнѣвителей. Когда кто заболѣетъ, вслѣдствіе обрядовой виновности предъ какимъ нибудь богомъ, то для выздоровленія обязательно долженъ принести ему жертву. Если самъ онъ, по болѣзни, не въ силахъ этого сдѣлать, то представляетъ въ залогъ какую нибудь вещь, приговаривая: „если ты (богъ) это (болѣзнь) насылаешь за мою вину, то облегчи; какъ подобаетъ тебѣ и какъ объяснитъ мнѣ кудесникъ, я помолюсь". Но когда неизвѣстно въ точности, какое божество гнѣвается и причинило болѣзнь, то говорятъ: „по чьей бы причинѣ ни случилась болѣзнь, восполню все, какъ будетъ объяснено кудесниками". Залогъ, какъ священная вещь, хранится особо, до исполненія обѣта. Исполнителями молитвъ при такихъ религіозныхъ обрядахъ являются мужчины или женщины, смотря по тому, какого пола божество, въ честь котораго совершается данная церемонія.

Перехожу къ описанію самыхъ церемоній.

1.

Церемонія въ честь матери-земли.

Безгрѣшная женщина, взявъ шесть орѣховъ и нѣсколько зеренъ проса, ведетъ больного къ ольховому дереву. Здѣсь она обноситъ три орѣха и нѣсколько просяныхъ зеренъ вокругъ дерева, во имя земли; потомъ тоже самое дѣлаетъ вокругъ орѣшника (грецкаго), во имя Адабна, прося его смиловаться надъ больнымъ. Затѣмъ она дѣлаетъ богато-убранную куклу человѣка, которую и хоронитъ въ землѣ, для „освобожденія" больного, и при этомъ возглашаетъ: „вмѣсто больного, поиграй и потѣшься надъ этимъ. Послѣ этого, пекутъ большой просяной хлѣбъ—„хлѣбъ земли-матери", и еще два длинныхъ хлѣба для Адабна. Та-же женщина беретъ по локтю отъ всѣхъ четырехъ краевъ перваго хлѣба, оба хлѣба въ честь Адабна, свѣчу и ладанъ и, вмѣстѣ съ больнымъ, идетъ къ перекрестку трехъ дорогъ; здѣсь она кладетъ у одной дороги локти просяного хлѣба, у другой—хлѣбы Адабна, а у третьей зажигаетъ свѣчи и тутъ-же кладетъ чевяки (обувь), приговаривая: „госпожа земля, это твоя обувь!" Затѣмъ, среди разложенныхъ вещей, ставитъ на колѣни больного съ „чикилою" (родъ вуали) на головѣ и проситъ: „Адгил-анху, Атула-анхуса, даруй ему твою благодать! подаждь ему крѣпость головы, сердца, тѣла! подаждь ему цвѣтъ, кожу, кость! вороти ему желаніе говорить, работать! дай ему силу! избавь его отъ лукаваго" и пр.; точно также она молится и Адьбиу. Послѣ сего женщина сбрасываетъ съ больного орѣховымъ прутикомъ чикилу, приподымаетъ его, ударяетъ по спинѣ хлыстомъ и говоритъ: „ступай, съ этого дня даю тебѣ свободу (азати)", и затѣмъ оба идутъ домой. Здѣсь разламываютъ по-поламъ просяной хлѣбъ; двѣ женщины берутъ по половинѣ этого хлѣба и становятся по обѣ стороны очага, одна противъ другой; больной троекратно проходитъ между ними подъ хлѣбомъ, при чемъ одна изъ женщинъ восклицаетъ: „дай мнѣ принявшаго еврейскую вѣру", а другая: „дай мнѣ обращеннаго въ христіанство".

Абхазецъ увѣренъ, что невидимое существо, вселившееся въ больного, оставляя его, тотчасъ спѣшитъ перейдти въ другого, и вотъ, чтобы помочь ему найдти новую жертву, ему молятся на перекресткѣ трехъ дорогъ, гдѣ происходитъ постоянное

движеніе народа и, слѣдовательно, всегда найдется, въ кого перейдти—искать долго не придется. А такъ какъ болѣзнь можно захватить даже отъ мѣста, гдѣ случайно упалъ или сѣлъ человѣкъ, то обрядъ умилостивленія земли долженъ происходить на самомъ мѣстѣ паденія или сидѣнья, откуда началась болѣзнь, и тутъ-же слѣдуетъ зарыть куклу. Поэтому-то абхазецъ, чтобы на томъ мѣстѣ, гдѣ онъ случайно сѣлъ, не захватить чего нибудь недобраго, троекратно плюетъ, вставая съ земли, и приговариваетъ: „Тутъ былъ дѣдушки моего домъ-дворъ!“

2.

Церемонія въ честь воды.

Когда кто-нибудь долго болѣетъ лихорадкою, то за совѣтомъ и помощью обращаются къ гадальщицѣ: та обыкновенно приказываетъ молиться водѣ, которая считается причиной болѣзни; а такъ какъ покровительница водъ, „мать воды“—женщина, то на церемонію приглашается безгрѣшная старушка.

Мѣстомъ пребыванія „матери воды“ считается большое, чистое, неприступное прѣсное озеро; она можетъ жить также въ чистомъ источникѣ, котораго не касается ничто нечистое, напр. свинья и т. п. „Мать воды“ выходитъ иногда изъ своего жилища на берегъ, и въ это время ее всѣмъ можно видѣть. Вотъ какъ описываютъ абхазцы эту „мать воды“. Она —красивѣйшая обворожительная женщина; локоны у нея безподобные, каштановые, глаза смѣющіеся. Обвороженный ею, абхазецъ говоритъ своимъ сверстникамъ: „Эхъ, братцы, меня побѣдила мать воды, и съ этого дня я уже не принадлежу вашему обществу. Недавно я зашелъ въ глухой лѣсъ, въ которомъ, подъ большимъ дубомъ, увидѣлъ приготовленную трапезу; тутъ-же стояло зеркало и горѣла свѣча; предъ зеркаломъ сидѣла „мать воды“ и, улыбаясь собственной красотѣ, причесывала свои длинные, до земли спустившіеся, волосы. У меня опустились руки въ изнеможеніи, я не могъ оторвать глазъ отъ такого удивительнаго видѣнія. Замѣтивъ меня, она тотчасъ прибрала волосы и пошла ко мнѣ. У меня закружилась голова... Не произнося ни слова, она подняла вверхъ всѣ десять пальцевъ, спрашивая меня этимъ: „согласишься или нѣтъ быть моимъ мужемъ впродолженіи десяти лѣтъ?..“ Я отрицательно покачалъ головою, но она не унималась и количествомъ показываемыхъ пальцевъ попеременно предлагала девять, восемь, семь и т. д. лѣтъ

супружества. Когда, благодаря моему отказу, она, наконецъ, подняла послѣдній палецъ—мизинецъ и вперила въ меня свои взоры, я тотчасъ-же изъявилъ согласіе..." *).

Приглашенная къ церемоніи „чистая" старушка незамѣтно для домочадцевъ больного беретъ какую нибудь его вещь, напр. платье и т. п., идетъ къ рѣчкѣ и, ставъ на берегу, причитываетъ: „матерь воды, госпожа, если больной связанъ тобою, то развяжи"; при этомъ взятою отъ больного вещью она трюкратно касается воды, зачерпываетъ ея нѣсколько капель въ ольховые листья, которые бережно приноситъ домой и прикрѣпляетъ надъ очагомъ къ потолку дома, будучи увѣрена, что лихорадка больного также испарится, какъ вода въ листьяхъ; затѣмъ старушка бѣжитъ вонъ изъ дому, съ словами: „пусть точно также побѣжитъ и твоя болѣзнь".

Если больной послѣ этого почувствуетъ облегченіе, то приглашаютъ молельщицу, приготовляютъ курицу и пѣтуха, начиненный прѣсный хлѣбъ, отливаютъ три свѣчи и распредѣляютъ такъ: курицу и одну свѣчу назначаютъ „матери водѣ", пѣтуха и другую свѣчу—мужу ея, а третью свѣчу—ихъ служанкѣ, которая называется Абзаһав-Абзачав (благодѣтельница). Больной отправляется съ женщиной-молельщицей къ водѣ и становится на колѣни. Молельщица-же беретъ свѣчу, зажигаетъ и ставитъ у воды, обращаясь съ мольбой объ облегченіи больного сначала къ „матери воды"—дздзлан дзаһвваж хиһһча гваша („матерь воды", „госпожа воды", Хиһһча Гваша); потомъ зажигаетъ другую и также ставитъ, прося о томъ-же „господина супруга" матери воды; наконецъ, ставитъ третью зажженную свѣчу, проситъ ихъ служанку быть посредницей и ходатаемъ за больного предъ „господами" и, обводя рукой по спинѣ больного, даетъ ему „азвти" (свободу) отъ болѣзни.

Такая-же церемонія совершается надъ молодой невѣсткой, когда ее впервые „выводятъ на воду" (т. е. ведутъ по-воду), и надъ роженицей, чтобы она имѣла обильное молоко. При этомъ, если описанной церемоніи нельзя совершить сполна, то на долю „матери воды" бросаютъ въ воду, при молитвѣ, яйцо.

Изъ опасенія осквернить воду, абхазецъ боится даже купаться въ проточной водѣ; если онъ выкупается, то, по выходѣ

*) Этнограф. письма изъ Абхазіи; Конст. Мачавріани, „Дроэба", за 1884—1885 гг.

изъ воды, беретъ три камешка и говоритъ: „сегодня я согрѣшилъ предъ тобою—зашелъ въ воду и выкупался, но ты прости меня", при чемъ обводитъ камешками вокругъ головы и затѣмъ ихъ бросаетъ въ воду.

3.

Церемонія въ честь радуги.

Церемонія въ честь радуги, необязательная для всѣхъ, совершается, большею частью, надъ тѣми больными, причиной болѣзни которыхъ, по указанію гадальщицы, является радуга. Долговременная желтизна лица, разслабленіе организма, неустойчивость въ характерѣ—все это абхазецъ приписываетъ тому, что больной зашелъ въ воду въ тотъ самый моментъ, когда изъ нея пила радуга.

Намѣтивъ жертвоприношеніе и пообѣщавъ моленіе, „чистыя" старушки выводятъ больного къ рѣчкѣ и приносятъ съ собою двухъ жареныхъ каплуновъ, два начиненные прѣсные хлѣба въ формѣ языка и другую провизію, какъ при совершеніи церемоніи въ честь воды. По обоимъ берегамъ рѣчки раскладываютъ чистыя вещи: платье, серебро и пр. и перебрасываютъ съ одного берега на другой нитяный мостикъ. Приготовивъ все это, молельщица, съ заранѣе сдѣланною куклою въ рукахъ, обходитъ вокругъ стоящаго на колѣняхъ больного, покрытаго кускомъ миткаля, и молитъ о немъ радугу именемъ Эліанѣшi; затѣмъ беретъ свѣчку и обращается съ такою-же молитвой къ „госпожѣ матери воды" и „господину мужу ея"; помолившись надъ провизіею, бросаетъ въ воду кусочки отъ каждаго кушанья; куклу-же усаживаетъ въ тыкву и, украсивъ эту послѣднюю зажженными свѣчами, пускаетъ внизъ по теченію рѣчки и приговариваетъ: „вмѣсто больного, потѣшься надъ этимъ". Наконецъ, молельщица-старушка проводитъ рукою по спинѣ больного, приподымаетъ его и, давъ ему свободу („азати") отъ болѣзни, отпускаетъ домой, наказавъ ему при возвращеніи не оглядываться назадъ; принесенная пища тутъ-же съѣдается участницами церемоніи, остатки отъ стола бросаются въ воду, а посуда на-чисто вымывается.

Вообще, этотъ молитвенный обрядъ считается въ Абхазіи самымъ священнымъ и имя радуги—А ц а q в а произносится съ великимъ благоговѣніемъ. По увѣренію абхазцевъ, послѣдствіемъ церемоніи въ честь радуги бываетъ дождь.

4.

Молитвенная церемонія въ честь вѣтра (n h ш a p n h a).

Приготовляется большой хлѣбъ съ сыромъ, кладется на плетенку и выносится поодаль отъ дома. Тутъ молятъ „госпожу вѣтеръ“ (божество женскаго пола), чтобы она повѣяла на нихъ добромъ, унесла подальше зло, избавила отъ всякихъ напастей и пр. Затѣмъ, вырѣзавъ серединную часть хлѣба, несутъ ее въ лѣсъ и вѣшаютъ на вершинѣ дуба; на другой день этой жертвой лакомится тотъ, кто первый подойдетъ къ дубу.

5.

Молитва въ честь дерева.

Въ день Успенія Богородицы пекутъ витушки по числу душъ мужескаго пола въ семьѣ; затѣмъ хозяинъ дома, съ домочадцами, подходитъ къ какому нибудь молодому дереву и, наступивъ на него ногою, молится: „Дерево, подаждь мнѣ твою благодать и счастье... Съ вершины дерева да благополучно снизойдутъ мнѣ. Свѣжая вѣточка, когда я наступлю на нее ногою, да окрѣпнетъ, а окрѣпшая да сдѣлается свѣжею (мягкою)“ и пр.

6.

Молитва въ честь A д ц q a или (что тоже) „внѣшнихъ“

Причиною заболѣванія человѣка и его скота бываютъ часто души усопшихъ („внѣшнія“): онѣ нерѣдко на него гнѣваются и внѣшними знаками этого гнѣва являются напускаемыя на прогнѣвавшихъ—частая зѣвота, сонливость и общее изнеможеніе. Если больной не удовлетворитъ гнѣвающихся „внѣшнею“ жертвою и молитвою, то его ожидаетъ неминуемая смерть. Въ одинъ изъ субботнихъ дней приготовляютъ кушанье изъ молодого барашка, куръ, кислаго молока и мяса коровы, если гнѣвается душа женщины, и всю эту провизію устанавливаютъ подъ навѣсомъ на скатерти, а по обѣ стороны ея кладутъ платье и драго-

дѣнныя вещи. Больного или больную ставятъ посреди круга и мужчина или женщина, соотвѣтственно полу больного, молится и проситъ живыхъ и мертвыхъ (Анги-пҳсниис) помиловать больного, даровать ему здоровье и принять приготовленную въ честь ихъ пищу. Послѣ этого молящійся за больного обводитъ рукой по его спинѣ и даетъ ему свободу отъ болѣзни („азати"). Въ томъ случаѣ, когда причиною болѣзни является душа князя или, вообще, высокопоставленнаго лица, привязываютъ тутъ-же лошадь, которую, при заключительныхъ словахъ молитвы: „это (лошадь) твоей душѣ", отвязываютъ и пускаютъ въ поле. Такая лошадь, по мнѣнію абхазца, вскорѣ разбухаетъ и издыхаетъ.

7.

Молитвенная церемонія въ честь Ажаһара.

Именемъ Ажаһара абхазцы называютъ покровителя или генія дома и домашняго очага, въ честь котораго совершается эта церемонія надъ молодыми супругами въ томъ періодѣ супружества, когда они еще не появлялись вмѣстѣ предъ старшими и когда молодая въ первый разъ вводится въ главный домъ мужа, или когда она приглашается въ свой отчій домъ. Одинъ изъ старѣйшихъ членовъ въ домѣ втыкаетъ на вертелъ сердце и печень жертвеннаго животнаго и проситъ Ажаһара быть покровителемъ молодыхъ дома и всюду внѣ его.

8.

Алишкантра.

Алишкантра—„госпожа" собакъ. По мнѣнію абхазца, кто имѣетъ хорошихъ собакъ, тотъ будетъ счастливъ и въ пріумноженіи скота: съ удачей на собакъ соединяется представленіе о счастьи на домашнихъ животныхъ. Поэтому-то, раньше моленій другимъ богамъ-покровителямъ домашнихъ животныхъ и дикихъ звѣрей, абхазцы молятся Алишкантрѣ, чтобы она дала имъ счастье на хорошихъ собакъ и возможность вырастить и размножить ихъ.

9.

Молитва въ честь Жабраиа.

Жабранъ—покровитель животныхъ. Молитвенную церемонію въ честь его совершаетъ каждый абхазецъ, имѣющій скотъ, въ сырную субботу. Для этого приготовляютъ сулугуни (большой сыръ), называемый „святымъ сыромъ"; на очагъ кладутъ тѣсто для хлѣба, въ которое мужчина втыкаетъ сердцевину сулугуни и молится: „Предпочти меня всѣмъ, произносящимъ твое имя; умножь мою скотину, увеличь ее настолько, чтобы въ будущемъ я могъ молиться тебѣ и приносить сыръ величиной въ этотъ хлѣбъ и чтобы дворъ мой не вмѣщалъ всей моей скотины. Сохрани мой скотъ отъ всякаго худа и напасти, какъ дома, такъ и вяѣ его; подай, чтобы мой скотъ, кромѣ стараго волоса и кала, не терялъ ничего; подай, чтобы стадо мое было такъ велико, чтобъ позади идущая скотина не могла догнать бѣгущей впереди; чтобы телята играли, подобно медвѣжатамъ, и блистали, подобно жеребятамъ. Вотъ о чемъ я прошу тебя". Затѣмъ молящій втыкаетъ въ хлѣбное тѣсто три палочки грецкаго орѣшника и, ударяя объ потолокъ, восклицаетъ: „вооц! чіпһш!" (кликъ, коимъ зовутъ скотину). Такая-же церемонія совершается въ четвергъ сырной недѣли въ честь покровителя козъ и называется Джабранъ.

10.

Моленіе въ честь Аіtһар'а.

Аіtһар есть покровитель домашняго скота и хуторнаго хозяйства. Моленія ему совершаются въ одну изъ субботъ, но только не въ постные дни, такъ какъ жертвоприношенія должны состоять изъ продуктовъ молока, а у богатыхъ—изъ телка, вспоеннаго молокомъ. Самымъ употребительнымъ при этомъ кушаньемъ бываетъ—жидкая каша на молокѣ недавно отелившейся коровы. Кругомъ котла или чашки, наполненной кашею, становятся пастухи, и старшій изъ нихъ по возрасту, взявъ восковую свѣчу, читаетъ молитву: „Аіtһар, даруй мнѣ превосходство предъ всѣми, произносящими твое имя", и затѣмъ проситъ его о размноженіи стадъ и о защитѣ ихъ отъ хищныхъ звѣрей. По окончаніи

молитвы, пастухъ бросаетъ три ложки каши на поставленную вблизи жаровню съ угольями, а остальное съѣдаютъ всѣ присутствующіе. Если моленіе Aitħap'у совершается жителями всего или части селенія, то приносится въ жертву теленокъ, котораго зарѣзываетъ самый почетный старикъ, произнося предварительно молитву. Когда мясо теленка бываетъ сварено или сжарено, то тотъ-же старикъ вторично произноситъ молитву, отрѣзывая небольшіе куски отъ всѣхъ частей животнаго, приноситъ въ жертву Aitħap'у, бросая ихъ на раскаленные уголья.

11.

Ажвепħшаа (Абн-інцваху).

Ажвепħшаа—богъ лѣсовъ и дикихъ звѣрей. Охотники приносятъ ему жертву предъ отправленіемъ на охоту, что̀ бываетъ обыкновенно въ половинѣ или въ концѣ декабря. Для принесенія жертвы, покупаютъ въ складчину козла или барана. Когда его сжарятъ, то старшій по возрасту охотникъ проситъ Ажвепħшаа послать успѣхъ ихъ предпріятію и, въ заключеніе молитвы, бросаетъ на уголья небольшіе куски жаренаго мяса и кусочекъ ладана. Каждый изъ остальныхъ охотниковъ, по очереди, повторяетъ молитву, прибавляя къ ней свои собственныя пожеланія и указывая, какое именно животное онъ хотѣлъ-бы убить, и при этомъ бросаетъ кусочки ладана на уголья.

12.

Джаджа и Анапħанга.

Джаджа—покровительница посѣвовъ. Моленія ей совершаются два раза въ годъ: въ мартѣ, съ началомъ весны, и въ ноябрѣ, послѣ уборки кукурузы. Моленіе Джаджѣ не сопровождается никакимъ особеннымъ торжествомъ и происходитъ тихо, въ каждомъ семействѣ отдѣльно. Богатые владѣльцы приглашаютъ иногда на эту молитву бывшихъ своихъ подвластныхъ, и именно тѣхъ изъ нихъ, которые принимали участіе въ посѣвѣ и уборкѣ ихъ хлѣба. Въ день, назначенный для моленія, приготовляются кушанья, исключительно изъ хлѣба и плодовъ, воздѣлываемыхъ хозяиномъ. Когда кушанья поставлены на столъ, старшій въ се-

мействѣ обращается съ молитвой къ Джаджѣ и благодаритъ за хорошій урожай или проситъ послать всего въ изобиліи. При весеннемъ моленіи Джаджѣ всѣ кушанья приготовляются постныя.

У Ананhанги, богини посѣвовъ, абхазецъ проситъ: „Гдѣ только я проведу борозду и ударю желѣзомъ и орудіемъ, да дастся мнѣ всюду изобиліе зерна; подай счастіе сѣятелю и потребителю". Въ честь Ананhанги молятся и во время жатвы, когда первый разъ привозятъ домой снопы; въ Успенскій-же постъ изъ колосьевъ дѣлаютъ крестъ, прикрѣпляютъ къ свѣчкѣ зерна кукурузы и лобіи для отвращенія вреда, наносимаго злыми духами, хотя-бы тою-же, напр., Джаджей. Эта Джаджа—безобразная, низенькая, толстая богиня; выйдя на ниву, она возглашаетъ: „нацвіс, нацвіс" (мизинецъ! мизинецъ!), т. е. пожеланіе, чтобы кукуруза на нивѣ достигла роста только въ мизинецъ; но если погнаться за Джаджей, съ словами: „ракі дзакі, ракі дзакі" (локоть-пядень, локоть-пядень), то она оставитъ ниву, и пожеланіе ея не исполнится.

Предъ молотьбой гоми великимъ богинямъ молятся, чтобы онѣ сохранили во здравіи все семейство и чтобы впредь всѣ домочадцы, и во главѣ ихъ сама хозяйка, собирались у колотушки для молотьбы гоми (сацехвэли).

13.

Моленіе о пчелахъ.

Пекутъ круглый хлѣбъ съ сыромъ, приносятъ его на пасѣку и молятся Ананагундѣо сохраненіи пчелъ; по возвращеніи-же домой, разламываютъ хлѣбъ и ѣдятъ такъ, чтобы не видѣть другъ друга, для чего одни становятся лицомъ къ однимъ дверямъ, а другіе—къ другимъ.

14.

Моленіе солнцу и лунѣ.

Къ солнцу абхазецъ обращается съ мольбой: „Солнышко, не лиши насъ твоей благодати, тепла и свѣта, благополучія и преуспѣянія во всемъ; даруй дѣвицамъ красоту, выразительность, изящество, чтобы онѣ, подобно тебѣ, свѣтили, блистали и сгорѣвали людей". Въ молитвенномъ-же обращеніи къ лунѣ выражаютъ пожеланіе, чтобы мальчики уподобились ея блеску.

15.

Моленіе Khnhath и Khvnaш'y.

Моленіе это совершаютъ въ субботу на Ѳоминой недѣлѣ, съ приношеніемъ въ жертву сыра, хлѣба, вина, свѣчей и пр. Идея его—испрошеніе здоровья и благоденствія семьѣ. Въ одну изъ слѣдующихъ субботъ молятся о томъ-же Khvnaш'y. Khnhath и Мджатh суть названія мужчинъ въ Абхазіи.

16.

„Ананаha".

Анан значитъ мать. Старшая въ домѣ женщина кладетъ на хлѣбъ деньги (Анан л пhара—денежка Ананы) и идетъ съ нимъ въ огородъ, гдѣ накладываетъ на хлѣбъ по три огуречныхъ листика и столько-же листиковъ себѣ на голову; затѣмъ, прикрѣпляетъ къ огуречному стеблю зажженую свѣчу и, взявъ въ руки ладанъ, молится: „Матери творительницы, не дайте мнѣ испытать горе по сыновьямъ, не ввергните меня въ печаль по нимъ, но покажите мнѣ ихъ благоденствіе". Такая-же молитва совершается въ честь Ашацанhа—бога-творителя или родителя. Въ жертву ему приносятъ корову и деньги. Въ великомъ посту сельскія дѣвушки молились также „матери водъ", чтобы она даровала имъ густые и длинные волосы.

17.

Моленіе за ухо.

Абхазецъ говоритъ: „ahca p лмha i клоу", что значитъ: „привѣшенный къ ушамъ дѣвицъ". Ломота въ колѣняхъ, неровность характера, общая слабость организма человѣка и пр.—все это послѣдствія „тяжелой причины". Для отвращенія болѣзни, подвѣшиваютъ къ уху, на подобіе сережки, пуговку. Чистая и безгрѣшная женщина ведетъ больного къ орѣховому кусту и ставитъ его на колѣни, а кругомъ него втыкаетъ въ землю семь орѣ-

ховыхъ палочекъ и къ каждой изъ нихъ прикрѣпляетъ по зажженой свѣчѣ и молится за больного hаniпha—генію, ходящему по скаламъ.

18.

Моленіе въ честь верховнаго существа.

Это верховное существо признается причиною многоразличныхъ болѣзней человѣка. Когда у тяжко больного сильно колеблется температура тѣла и его бросаетъ то въ жаръ, то въ холодъ; когда онъ теряетъ сознаніе или падаетъ въ обморокъ, на мгновеніе приходитъ въ себя и затѣмъ вновь начинаетъ метаться, бредить, пѣть пѣсни, бормотать молитвы и проч.,—то всѣ такія тяжкія болѣзненныя явленія у абхазцевъ считаются несомнѣнными признаками воздѣйствія на больного верховной силы, верховныхъ божествъ (Анца ·р мзз)—„божественная есть причина". Абхазцы увѣрены, что эта „божественная причина" вселилась въ больного, и потому говорятъ: Анца дрthоуп, т. е. „богъ пришелъ гостить". Когда гадальщица подтвердитъ, что болѣзнь дѣйствительно произошла отъ того, что въ больного „вселился богъ", —то въ домѣ больного съ этого времени всѣ должны принять на себя веселый видъ и радоваться, а не печалиться, ибо „гдѣ поселился богъ, тамъ можетъ быть одно только веселье". Поэтому, въ домѣ такого больного собирается сельская молодежь, всѣ начинаютъ пѣть и плясать, и если только самъ больной въ силахъ, то и его заставляютъ принимать участіе въ пляскахъ и пѣніи.

Молитвенное жертвоприношеніе совершается по близости дома, у опушки лѣса. Въ жертву приносятъ козла или козленка, барана или ягненка, также хлѣбы и пр. Все это приносится къ назначенному мѣсту, куда приводятъ и больного. Женщины при этомъ отсутствуютъ, такъ какъ онѣ не могутъ приближаться къ этому священному мѣсту. Затѣмъ старецъ, держа свѣчу, возглашаетъ: „Великій богъ, сегодняшній богомолецъ, какъ надлежитъ и какъ указано гадальщицей, предсталъ предъ тобою и принесъ хлѣбы, привелъ жертвенныхъ животныхъ... Помилуй его, смилуйся надъ нимъ; если онъ согрѣшилъ предъ тобою, прости его; прошу тебя отстать отъ него съ сегодняшняго дня, оставить и освободить его, подобно развязанному узлу". Произнеся эти слова, старецъ обводитъ больного свѣчею, зажигаетъ ее и ставитъ тутъ-же; затѣмъ

береть другую свѣчу и молится Микэлю-Габріэл. По совершеніи этой церемоніи, больной самъ одинъ возвращается домой, а другіе садятся тутъ-же обѣдать.

Впрочемъ, одной такой церемоніи считается недостаточно для проводовъ столь высокаго гостя, какъ богъ. Поэтому, абхазецъ долженъ ежегодно повторять эту церемонію. Въ честь тогоже верховнаго существа устанавливается праздникъ въ одинъ изъ дней недѣли: день этотъ почитается такимъ священнымъ, что втеченіи его даже домъ остается не выметеннымъ и пр.

19.

Anhi.

Anhi *) есть богъ и повелитель грома, молніи и всѣхъ вообще, атмосферическихъ явленій. Въ честь этого бога совершаются въ Абхазіи самыя торжественныя моленія.

Въ день, назначенный для молитвы,—а это бываетъ обыкновенно при угонѣ стадъ на лѣтнее время въ горы и при возвращеніи ихъ оттуда осенью,—пастухи селенія раздѣляются на нѣсколько группъ, и каждая изъ нихъ выбираетъ какое нибудь живописное мѣсто въ лѣсу, вблизи ручья, или рѣки. По числу участниковъ закалывается нѣсколько барановъ, и старшій изъ пастуховъ, уходящихъ въ горы, обращается къ Anhi, моля его сохранить, какъ ихъ самихъ, такъ и стада ихъ отъ громовыхъ ударовъ. Женщины и дѣти не смѣютъ присутствовать при моленіи Anhi, а первыя не должны даже и произносить его имени. Говоря объ Anhi, абхазцы обыкновенно выражаются: хахікал (который на верху, или верховный).

Во время продолжительной засухи, въ честь Anhi совершается моленіе съ жертвоприношеніемъ. Выбирается изъ стада лучшій быкъ и назначается день для жертвоприношенія. Жители приносятъ гоми, хлѣбъ, свѣжій сыръ и кувшинъ вина. Самый почетный старикъ берется за веревку, надѣтую на рога быка, и, снявъ шапку, читаетъ слѣдующую молитву: „О Anhi, повелитель грома, молніи и дождя! сжалься надъ бѣднымъ своимъ народомъ. Наши посѣвы высохли, трава выгорѣла, скотъ издыхаетъ безъ корма, и потому

*) См. Сборн. свѣдѣн. о кавк. горцахъ, вып. V, Тифл. 1871 г., стр. 15—16 ст. Религіозныя вѣрованія абхазцевъ, А-а,—гдѣ божество это, впрочемъ, названо Афы.

намъ угрожаетъ голодная смерть. Повели скатиться дождевымъ тучамъ, повели загремѣть грому, засверкать молніи и пошли дождь для спасенія погибающаго народа". По произнесеніи присутствующими аминь, жертва закалывается и мясо ея варятъ. Когда всѣ яства, изъ принесенныхъ продуктовъ, приготовлены и разложены на плетенки, старикъ, читавшій молитву, повторяетъ ее еще разъ, и затѣмъ начинается пиръ, при пѣніи хвалебнаго гимна въ честь Anhi. Гимнъ этотъ называется Анчва рысшва и поется въ честь Anhi не только на пирахъ, но и во время грозы. Въ первомъ случаѣ, его поютъ въ благодарность за дары, которыми пользуются, а во второмъ—въ надеждѣ умолить Anhi послать хорошую погоду. На пирахъ одинъ изъ стариковъ обращается обыкновенно къ присутствующимъ съ рѣчью, въ которой напоминаетъ, что все, чѣмъ они пользуются въ настоящую минуту, есть благодать Anhi, и предлагаетъ возблагодарить его. Тогда одинъ изъ присутствующихъ начинаетъ прославлять бога: „Анчва дукhва злыпhха ххаура! о, ты, который съ неба нисходишь съ молніей и возносишься на небо съ громомъ; которому извѣстно число звѣздъ на небѣ и песку на днѣ морскомъ..." и т. д. и оканчиваетъ стихъ словами: ахдау. Всѣ присутствующіе, раздѣленные на двѣ группы, поочередно повторяютъ каждый стихъ гимна, и непремѣнно по три раза.

Пораженіе молніей домашней скотины вызываетъ непремѣнно моленіе Anhi; въ противномъ случаѣ, если онъ не будетъ умилостивленъ жертвою, надо ожидать повторенія его посѣщенія. Хозяинъ убитой скотины приглашаетъ жителей селенія, безъ различія возраста и пола. На мѣстѣ, гдѣ убита скотина, устраивается вышка, сажени въ полторы высотой, такъ, чтобы хищныя животныя не могли на нее взобраться. Всѣ присутствующіе окружаютъ убитое животное, берутъ другъ друга за руки и, приплясывая, поютъ: одна половина—Воетла, другая отвѣчаетъ ей—Чаупа́р, и, при пляскѣ и пѣніи, подымаютъ животное на вышку, оставляя его тамъ на жертву хищнымъ птицамъ. Затѣмъ, хозяинъ пораженной молніей скотины приноситъ въ жертву Anhi быка, и, при этомъ, благодаря его за настоящее, проситъ, тѣмъ неменѣе, избавить его отъ дальнѣйшихъ посѣщеній. Изъ мяса жертвы приготовляются кушанья, приносятся хлѣбъ, сыръ, вино, и присутствующіе цѣлый день пируютъ на счетъ пострадавшаго. День, когда была убита молніей скотина, бываетъ такъ памятенъ въ родѣ того, кого такимъ образомъ посѣтилъ Anhi, что ни самъ глава семьи,

ни его дѣти въ годовщину этого событія никому и ничего не дадутъ, говоря, что ожидаютъ въ этотъ день посѣщенія Anhi.

Надъ человѣкомъ, пораженнымъ молніей, совершается тотъ-же самый обрядъ. Во время пляски вокругъ трупа никто изъ родственниковъ убитаго не смѣетъ плакать,—въ противномъ случаѣ, всѣ присутствующіе будутъ поражены громовымъ ударомъ.

„Недавно, пишетъ г. Гіоргидзе въ 1888 году въ газ. „Иверія", съ плачемъ и рыданіемъ хоронили одного человѣка. Въ это время громовой ударъ сразилъ двухъ быковъ, пасшихся тутъ-же. Плачъ и рыданіе моментально замѣнились пляской и пѣніемъ „Атлар чоупһ". Убитыхъ быковъ подняли и установили на деревѣ, а затѣмъ, при гробовомъ молчаніи, предали землѣ покойника".

Трупъ человѣка, сраженнаго громовымъ ударомъ, кладутъ въ гробъ, ставятъ на вышку и оставляютъ его тамъ до тѣхъ поръ, пока отъ него не останутся однѣ кости; тогда гробъ снимаютъ и хоронятъ, совершивъ надъ нимъ обыкновенный погребальный обрядъ, справивъ установленныя обычаемъ поминки.

Вѣроятно, такой обрядъ ставленія или подвѣшиванья труповъ людей, сраженныхъ Anhi, подалъ поводъ древнимъ грекоримскимъ писателямъ и географу Вахуштію свидѣтельствовать, что въ Абхазіи и Колхидѣ умершихъ мужчинъ не хоронили, но вѣшали ихъ трупы на деревьяхъ. Вотъ слова Вахуштія: „Христіане по религіи, абхазцы не знаютъ своей вѣры и потому считаются идолопоклонниками. И, дѣйствительно, вмѣсто того, чтобы хоронить своихъ покойниковъ, они одѣваютъ ихъ въ лучшее платье и оружіе, запираютъ въ ящики и ставятъ на деревья". Аполлоній Родосскій (250—200 л. до Р. Х.) пишетъ о Колхидѣ: „Тамъ росло много винограда и ивъ, на верхушкахъ которыхъ на цѣпяхъ повѣшены были трупы умершихъ. И теперь еще считается у Колховъ за преступленіе жечь трупы мужчинъ или даже зарывать ихъ въ землю и засыпать курганами; ихъ кладутъ въ необдѣланныя бычачьи кожи и далеко за городомъ вѣшаютъ на деревья; но и земля получаетъ свое, какъ и воздухъ, ибо ей предаются трупы женщинъ; таковъ ужъ у нихъ законъ" *). Тоже самое свидѣтельствуется въ Variae Historiae: „Колхи кладутъ мертвыхъ въ кожи, зашиваютъ ихъ и вѣшаютъ на деревья" **). Нимфодоръ Сиракузскій (жилъ около половины IV вѣка до Р. Хр.) говоритъ,

*) Грекo-Римскіе писатели о Кавказѣ, Тифлисъ, стр. 49.
**) Тамъ-же, стр. 162.

что „у Колховъ не принято ни сжигать, ни хоронить трупы мужчинъ. Трупы эти они кладутъ въ свѣжія кожи животныхъ и вѣшаютъ на деревьяхъ. Трупы-же женщинъ они предаютъ землѣ... Они почитаютъ больше всего небо и землю" *).

20.

Ш а ш а.

Подъ именемъ Ш а ш а абхазцы разумѣютъ изобрѣтателя кузнечнаго дѣла. Объ немъ говорятъ: „Ш а ш а х э а h-д о у", что, въ переводѣ, значитъ: „Шаша, великій господинъ ремеслъ". Шаша или Шаш былъ первымъ кузнецомъ. Раскаленное желѣзо онъ бралъ не щипцами, а руками, и ковалъ не на наковальнѣ, а на своихъ колѣнахъ. Онъ—изобрѣтатель не одного только кузнечнаго дѣла, но и изобрѣтатель-покровитель 363 другихъ ремеслъ. Онъ чрезвычайно могущественъ и горячъ. Сама кузница, со всѣми ея принадлежностями, есть образъ Шаша **).

Молевія ему совершаются наканунѣ новаго года, и самый полный обрядъ производится кузнецами и слесарями.

Наканунѣ новаго года, хозяинъ рѣжетъ теленка или барана, а жена его—по одному пѣтуху на каждаго члена семейства и приготовляетъ пирогъ изъ пшеничной муки съ свѣжимъ сыромъ. Печенку и сердце всѣхъ зарѣзанныхъ животныхъ жаритъ отдѣльно, причемъ, вмѣсто вертела, употребляютъ палочку свѣжаго орѣшника. Когда кушанья готовы и принесены въ кузницу, то кузнецъ складываетъ на наковальнѣ всѣ свои инструменты, а вблизи ея ставитъ жаровню съ угольями, и все семейство его становится на колѣни вокругъ наковальни. Снявъ башлыкъ и поясъ (какъ доказательство, что обращается къ Шаша съ открытымъ сердцемъ и мыслями), кузнецъ зажигаетъ восковую свѣчу, бросаетъ ладанъ на уголья жаровни и обращается къ Шаша съ молитвой: чтобы онъ ниспослалъ ему и семьѣ здравіе и долголѣтіе и чтобы орудія, дѣлаемыя изъ желѣза, послужили ему въ пользу, а не во вредъ. По окончаніи молитвы, когда присутствующіе произнесутъ „аминь", хозяинъ отрѣзываетъ кусочки пирога и внутренностей, сжаренныхъ на орѣховомъ вертелѣ, и бросаетъ ихъ на жаровню, приговаривая: „До тѣхъ поръ, пока я не буду въ состоя-

*) Греко-Римскіе писатели о Кавказѣ, стр. 208.

**) Иверія, 1888 г., № 186.

нія этими кусочками накормить всѣхъ Шервашидзе и Анчабадзе, пусть никто не болѣетъ въ моемъ семействѣ. Молю тебя объ этомъ, Шаша, принося тебѣ настоящую жертву". Кузнецъ отрѣзываетъ затѣмъ такіе-же кусочки отъ прочихъ жертвъ и раздаетъ ихъ всѣмъ членамъ семейства, которые съѣдаютъ ихъ и запиваютъ тремя глотками вина. Вино для этой трапезы хозяинъ назначаетъ тотчасъ послѣ уборки винограда и хранитъ его въ отдѣльномъ кувшинѣ, называемомъ шёшер гапhши, зарытомъ въ самой кузницѣ; подъ страхомъ наказанія Шаша, къ нему не смѣетъ, ни въ какой крайности, прикасаться, раньше кануна новаго года, ни самъ хозяинъ, ни, тѣмъ болѣе, кто-либо изъ постороннихъ. По окончаніи моленія, приготовленныя яства переносятся въ домъ кузнеца, куда собираются сосѣди и пируютъ во славу Шаша до разсвѣта.

Моленіе Шаша въ канунъ новаго года совершаютъ также и нѣкоторые князья, причемъ присутствующіе на нихъ люди, бывшіе когда-то въ зависимости отъ этихъ князей, приносятъ каждый по пѣтуху. Шаша—одно изъ божествъ, чаще другихъ призываемое абхазцами.

По понятію абхазцевъ, божество, имя котораго было призвано ложно, немедленно наказываетъ провинившагося тѣми средствами или орудіями, которыя входятъ въ кругъ его спеціальности. Такъ, напр., призвавшій ложно имя Anhi, распоряжающагося грозою, не можетъ быть наказанъ посредствомъ огнестрѣльнаго или холоднаго оружія, составляющихъ спеціальность Шаша, и т. д.

Присяга Шаша бываетъ двухъ родовъ: въ кузницѣ и подъ открытымъ небомъ. Въ первомъ случаѣ, кузнецъ, положивъ молотъ на наковальню и сложивъ руки на груди, становится по одну ея сторону, присягающій—по другую сторону наковальни, противъ кузнеца, а тотъ, по дѣлу котораго приносится присяга, становится въ сторонѣ. Присягающій, взявъ въ руки молотъ, говоритъ: „Если я виноватъ въ томъ, въ чемъ меня обвиняютъ, то пусть Шаша разобьетъ мою голову на наковальнѣ"; при этихъ словахъ онъ ударяетъ три раза молотомъ по наковальнѣ,—присяга считается совершонной. Во второмъ случаѣ, вбиваютъ въ землю двѣ палки, одну противъ другой, на нихъ вѣшаютъ заряженныя ружья, дуломъ обращенныя въ промежутокъ, занимаемый присягающимъ; въ сторонѣ становятся присутствующіе. Присягающій произноситъ: „Если я сказалъ ложъ,—пусть Шаша пронзитъ мою голову пулями

изъ этихъ ружей", и три раза проходитъ чрезъ промежутокъ между ружьями.

Принесшій ложную присягу, при первомъ-же недугѣ, сопряженномъ съ головными болями, проситъ родственниковъ узнать у ворожеи причину его болѣзни. Ворожея, отъ самого-же кузнеца обыкновенно заранѣе знающая обо всѣхъ принимавшихъ присягу, раскинувъ зерна лобіи или взглянувъ на звѣзды, указываетъ причину болѣзни—ложную присягу, принесенную Шаша тогда-то, по такому-то дѣлу и въ такой-то кузницѣ. Одинъ изъ родственниковъ заболѣвшаго отправляется къ тому, по чьему дѣлу была принята ложная присяга, и подарками склоняетъ его вымолить у Шаша прощеніе больному, обѣщая, конечно, что тотъ, по выздоровленіи, удовлетворитъ его сполна. Затѣмъ оба они отправляются въ кузницу, гдѣ была принесена присяга, и обвиняющій больного, снявъ съ себя поясъ, какъ свидѣтельство, что его обращеніе къ Шаша будетъ искреннимъ, подходитъ къ наковальнѣ и произноситъ молитву, въ которой проситъ Шаша снять болѣзнь съ виновнаго, какъ залогъ того, что больной, когда выздоровѣетъ, самъ явится вымаливать себѣ прощеніе у Шаша; затѣмъ, оставивъ въ кузницѣ кусочекъ желѣза, онъ идетъ къ больному, чтобы успокоить его. Если больной выздоровѣетъ, то, удовлетворивъ обиженнаго имъ, онъ приходитъ, вмѣстѣ съ нимъ, въ кузницу и, положивъ на наковальню мелкую серебряную монету (неменѣе двухъ рублей), благодаритъ Шаша за свое выздоровленіе; принесенные-же имъ баранъ, хлѣбъ и вино передаются кузнецу, отъ котораго, послѣ молитвы, онъ получаетъ кусочки печени и сердца барана и отсылаетъ ихъ въ семью, какъ знакъ полученнаго отъ Шаша прощенія, а самъ, вмѣстѣ съ кузнецомъ, обиженнымъ имъ лицомъ и своими родственниками, съѣдаетъ въ домѣ кузнеца принесенныя яства.

21.

Моленіе Эйріг-аацныхъ'у.

Эйріг-аацныхъ'ъ есть покровитель воровства, грабежей и разбоевъ. Это божество за рѣкою Бзыбью носитъ названіе Чугурухныхъ, и всѣ абхазцы, отправлявшіеся на воровство къ убыхамъ, шапсугамъ и другимъ горцамъ, приносили жертву Чугурухныху, алтарь котораго, если можно такъ выразиться, нахо-

дился на отвѣсной скалѣ за укрѣпленіемъ Гагры. Моленіе этому богу совершается исключительно лишь занимающимися покровительствуемыми имъ „художествами". Въ жертву ему приносятся четыре коническихъ хлѣба, надъ ними читается молитва, въ которой испрашивается благословеніе предпріятію и дается обѣщаніе, въ случаѣ успѣха, пожертвовать богу еще что нибудь. Хлѣбы берутся въ дорогу. Благодарственная-же жертва приносится изъ числа украденныхъ вещей, а если уворованы лошадь или рогатый скотъ, то жертва состоитъ изъ пряди волосъ отъ украденнаго животнаго, и все это вѣшается на деревья, въ окрестностяхъ того мѣста, гдѣ предполагается постоянное мѣстопребываніе Эйрігаацных'а.

22.

Аныбс-ныха-дудрюпhш.

Сильнѣйшимъ изъ боговъ почитается Аныбс-ныха-дудрюпhш, мѣстопребываніемъ котораго считается гора Дудрюпhш. Осмѣливающіеся подняться на эту гору немедленно наказываются слѣпотою; поэтому, молитвы и жертвоприношенія божеству совершаются у подножія горы. Какъ божество, Аныбс-ныха не имѣетъ никакой исключительной, профессіональной области вѣдѣнія, но почитается выше и могущественнѣе всѣхъ другихъ божествъ. Порядокъ моленій и жертвоприношеній ему тотъ-же, какъ и Шаша, съ тою только разницею, что при принесеніи предъ нимъ присяги говорится: „Пусть Аныбс-ныха нашлетъ на меня слѣпоту и всякую болѣзнь..." и т. д.

Мѣстопребываніе Аныбс-ныха находится подъ исключительнымъ надзоромъ многочисленной абхазской фамиліи Анхаё-Чичба. Правомъ этимъ Чичба пользуются уже нѣсколько поколѣній, и оно доставляетъ имъ большой доходъ, такъ какъ разрѣшеніе на принесеніе жертвы божеству покупается у нихъ подарками. Не доходя до вершины горы Дудрюпhш, настоящаго мѣстопребыванія Аныбс-ныха, подъ дубомъ, лежитъ камень, въ который врѣзанъ образъ Божіей Матери; всѣ присягающіе обязаны класть на этотъ камень какую нибудь монету, или что-либо металлическое, и горе тому, кто искусится взять хоть одну изъ находящихся тутъ вещицъ!

23.

Канунъ Рождества и Новаго года.

Наканунѣ Рождества Христова, въ каждомъ семействѣ, по числу душъ, рѣжутъ куръ и приготовляютъ на каждаго члена по четыре кваквари, т. е. небольшихъ хлѣбца, начиненныхъ сыромъ. До первыхъ пѣтуховъ куры должны быть сжарены и кваквари спечены. Послѣ первыхъ пѣтуховъ, хозяинъ ставитъ на столъ чашки, кладетъ въ каждую изъ нихъ по курицѣ и по четыре кваквари и прилѣпляетъ къ чашкамъ по восковой свѣчѣ. Неподалеку отъ стола, помѣщается жаровня съ угольями. Всѣ члены семейства становятся на колѣни вокругъ стола, каждый противъ своей чашки, и старшій въ семьѣ, снявъ шапку и бросивъ ладанъ на жаровню, проситъ Бога, чтобы онъ сохранилъ его и семейство его отъ разстройства желудка. По окончаніи молитвы, всѣ встаютъ, оборачиваются направо и кланяются на востокъ, затѣмъ ѣдятъ каждый свою долю, причемъ стараются окончить трапезу непремѣнно до разсвѣта.

Подъ Новый годъ, послѣ ужина, въ каждомъ семействѣ также совершается моленіе о ниспосланіи всѣхъ благъ. Для этого приготовляютъ четыреугольный пирогъ, начиненный сыромъ, и кладутъ его на доску, къ которой прилѣпляютъ восковую свѣчу. Все семейство становится кругомъ на колѣни, и старшій въ родѣ, бросивъ ладанъ на уголья, произноситъ молитву; затѣмъ пирогъ съѣдаютъ, а остатки сжигаютъ на угольяхъ. Моленіе это называется Калінда. Въ первый день Новаго года совершается моленіе Гуныхва (сердечная молитва). Для нея приготовляются, по числу членовъ семейства, пшеничные хлѣбцы, съ запеченнымъ въ нихъ яйцомъ. Глава семейства, поднося къ груди каждаго хлѣбецъ, обращается къ Богу съ молитвой, въ которой проситъ избавить ихъ отъ болѣзней сердца. Послѣ молитвы, каждый съѣдаетъ свой хлѣбецъ.

24.

Засуха.

Во время сильной лѣтней засухи собираются всѣ сельскія дѣвушки въ лучшихъ своихъ нарядахъ, неподалеку отъ рѣки. Раздѣлившись на три группы, онѣ приготовляютъ изъ вѣтокъ плотъ, настилаютъ его соломой и дѣлаютъ куклу, которую одѣваютъ жен-

ниной. Когда всѣ эти приготовленія окончены, приводятъ осла, покрываютъ его бѣлою простынею, сажаютъ на него куклу, одна изъ дѣвушекъ, беретъ за поводъ осла, двѣ другія поддерживаютъ куклу и направляются къ рѣкѣ, гдѣ устроенъ плотъ; остальныя же дѣвушки идутъ по обѣимъ сторонамъ процессіи, распѣвая: „Дзіва дзіва дзвари! Кве ква жжирцих аибш-ах іиба дід мівайт дзы хучіи, дзы хучіи", что значитъ въ переводѣ: „Воды, воды достать! Достать воды дождевой—маргаритку красную! Сынъ Владыки, мы жаждемъ живого воды, живого воды!". Придя къ рѣкѣ, снимаютъ съ осла куклу, сажаютъ ее на плотъ и, запрудивъ сѣчку, пускаютъ плотъ по теченію воды; затѣмъ стараются загнать въ воду осла, для чего, конечно, употребляется немало усилій. Оселъ, наконецъ, спущенъ въ рѣчку и, добравшись до противоположный берегъ, начинаетъ пріучать, что считается самымъ вѣрнымъ предзнаменованіемъ скораго дождя. Если-же оселъ при этомъ не запрячется, то на другой или на третій день то-же церемонія повторяется вновь.

25.

Святые.

Независимо отъ общаго почитанія всѣхъ нынѣ почитаемыхъ божествъ, жители селеній Лыхны, Лзаа и Илори состоятъ подъ покровительствомъ святыхъ, которымъ посвящены воздвигнутыя въ этихъ селеніяхъ церкви, или, лучше сказать, состоятъ подъ покровительствомъ самыхъ церквей. Въ Лыхнахъ каждое семейство признаетъ покровительство **Анаа-Лыхныхъ** (Матерь Лыхнинская), въ Лзаа—**Анаа-Лзааныхъ** (Матерь Лзаанская, т. е. храмъ Пицундскій во имя Божіей Матери), въ Илори—**Цминда Гіорги** (храмъ св. Георгія). Для принятія на себя ихъ покровительства необходимы жертвы, которыя и приносятся каждымъ семействомъ ежегодно, въ одно изъ воскресеній, поочередно.

Въ день, назначенный для жертвоприношенія, выбирается изъ стада лучшая годовалая телушка и вводится вечеромъ въ домъ, гдѣ постоянно живетъ семейство, исправляющее у храма должность. Приготовляется ужинъ, состоящій изъ варенаго или жареная барана, и все семейство постится и надѣваетъ чистое бѣлье. Глава семьи, взявъ въ одну руку восковую свѣчу, а въ другую веревку, привязанную за шею [illegible]ка, обращается къ храму съ

молитвою о покровительствѣ себѣ и семьѣ, причемъ оговаривается, что храму посвящается телушка и весь приплодъ отъ нея мужескаго пола будетъ приноситься въ жертву храму, а вмѣсто телушекъ будутъ приноситься въ жертву бараны. Послѣ этой молитвы, телушкѣ надрѣзываютъ ухо, и съ этого времени она считается неприкосновенною и не можетъ быть употребляема въ пищу. Телушка, въ день ея посвященія храму, должна ночевать въ домѣ, вмѣстѣ съ семействомъ.

Если кто нибудь изъ жителей трехъ выше названныхъ селеній переходитъ на жительство въ другое мѣсто, то онъ и тамъ обязанъ ежегодно приносить жертву храму роднаго селенія. Изъ этого правила не исключаются и дѣвушки этихъ селеній, выходящія за-мужъ за жителей другихъ селеній; какъ онѣ сами, такъ и дѣти ихъ, все-таки, считаются состоящими подъ покровительствомъ Лыхнскаго, Пицундскаго или Илорскаго храмовъ и, потому, обязаны приносить имъ жертвы.

М. Джанашвили.

ДОБАВЛЕНІЕ.

Абхазскія поговорки и пословицы *).

Акамбаш ахул абоон, аанда абоомзт	Буйволъ видѣлъ брюкву, забора не замѣтилъ.
Ацгу апhа аhнапh аквоіт	Дѣтенышъ кота пойнаетъ мышку (т. е. по отцу пойдетъ).
Акут іалшоо акутагhі оуп	Курица можетъ только яйца несть.
Аж ашап аhс ашвам	Нога коровы не убьетъ теленка (т. е. корова не убьетъ своего теленка).
Ацгу ахвартhа эназтhамла, аш бааун аhоон	Котъ не доскочилъ до корзины съ сыромъ и сказалъ: „онъ гнилъ" (соотвѣтствуетъ грузинской пословицѣ, въ которой, при такой-же неудачѣ, котъ вспоминаетъ, что „сегодня постный день").
Тhакважк бу цутhак лгухэан, ла лгухэа аов ікмзт	Старуха печалилась о семи селеніяхъ, а о ней (самой) никто не печалился.
Аов бзіа дзніава аов іпhх діхаhвоіт	Кто встрѣтитъ хорошаго человѣка, тотъ человѣческую душу обрѣтетъ.
Ав іашва гвара ітhахм, і мала дкаhвоіт	Пьяному человѣку пинка не нужно: самъ повалится.

*) Изъ газеты „Иверія" за 1888 г., №№-ра: 196, 203, 206 и 208. Къ русскому переводу, по большей части дословному, въ необходимыхъ случаяхъ сдѣланы поясненія и ссылки на соотвѣтствующія пословицы въ другихъ языкахъ.

[60]

Ав-дздзэік р бжара ахупhа дбжапhсіт	Питомецъ сталъ жертвою двухъ кормилицъ (соотвѣтствуетъ русской: „у семи нянекъ дитя безъ глазу“).
Ак згз ігз ідрван, вба згз ігз іздрамзт	Кто имѣетъ одинъ недостатокъ, сознаетъ (его), кто два—нѣтъ.
Адз ар ігухэан, адз амаж ігухэан	Одного озабочивалъ походъ, другого озабочивало довольствіе (къ походу).
Хусіка эгіічован, эгіірапован.	Хусикъ (что̀) мотыжилъ, (то и) топталъ.
Ач эзміаіз, аквадр дасвон	Не справившись съ лошадью, по сѣдлу билъ (т. е. на сѣдлѣ вымещалъ).
Ар іргаз іргэіт, іаанхаз бакура ікаіцэіт	Что̀ угнало войско, то угнало, а остальное досталось Бакурѣ.
Агрва дэімрӷоо эналага, упhаӷа зіца qэупhа іарhован	Когда грабили мингрельца, говорили: „у тебя борода крива, потому и грабимъ“.
Апhhс бзіа л—хаӷа мвнпhа іітhахам	Мужу хорошей женщины не надо провизіи (т. е. приносить, заботиться о провизіи).
Аов дандзша аhhабж іаhавом	Если человѣка ждетъ гибель, зова (крика) не услышитъ.
Анхав ідзра энааілаві ілаба кдхн дцооіт	Придется пропадать крестьянину, возьметъ палку (посохъ) да и поплетется.
Асс збз хааз іаінзгі іацэіт, іаінмзгі	Сладкоязычный ягненокъ мать и не-мать высосалъ (соотвѣтствуетъ русской: „ласковый теленокъ двѣ матки сосетъ“.
Эгізхарамзт абга-худч алакhва ірпhэіт	Безвиннаго шакала собаки сожрали.
Аh-аhкважі энэімацгэха, аhтhапhhс ахгара ложіт	Какъ начались ссоры у господина и госпожи,—служанкѣ легче стало.
Ат абла эноу, „аджмш, аджмш“ аhовон.	Найдя глазъ, филинъ кричалъ: „бровей, бровей“.
Саб ічага смазар эга счарн	Отцовской мотыгой и я-бы много смотыжилъ.

Ласс ирмгаз аҭнҳҳа лані ларәі кәтла зісван	Долго засидѣвшаяся въ невѣстахъ съ матерью палкою дралась.
Австһаа ітһа рхи амца эцраіҧоон	Дьяволъ, когда скосилъ свое сѣно, поджегъ его.
Алаба qіш ах укргі ваqішвоіт, аҧхва экргі ваqішвоіт	Запачканной палки оба конца пачкаютъ.
Ач аҧхва укр адз урнагооіт, ала ҧхва укр адз утһанажвоіт	Лошадь, если возьмешься за ея хвостъ, чрезъ воду выведетъ, а схватишься за хвостъ собаки, она тебя сброситъ въ воду.
Ач ҳҵср ад аҭһихоіт, аов дҳҵср іажа ітһихооіт	Лошадь околѣетъ,—поле останется, а человѣкъ умретъ,—слово останется.
Ашара зхлҧз абліс іоуп, ахаҧара зхлҧз дҳәһамбаруп	Страхъ произошелъ отъ сатаны, а геройство отъ пророка.
Абга ішнарцооз: „васкәпһ, васкәпһ“ аһоон	За шакаломъ гнались, а онъ: „курдюкъ, курдюкъ“ кричалъ.
Аһкваж лапһхэ аһдчск бліт	Предъ госпожей поросенокъ сгорѣлъ.
Вага сасра думштһан	Дурака въ гости не посылай.
Акут ашга ашацхб іҧнахіт	Курица своей лапой ножъ на себя вырыла.
Адз утһалаандза уч-хумтн	Пока въ воду не войдешь, платья не снимай.
Адз іагооз дччон	Водою уносимый смѣялся.
Ач зтз іітһіван, ачанхіча іівамзт	Продавалъ хозяинъ (свою) лошадь, а конюхъ (ему) не позволялъ.
Х ҳҵсргі, ажа ҳҵсвам	Голова умретъ, слово не умретъ.
Ала хага ачаш эікнгугһвоіт	Сумасшедшая собака надѣется сырный хлѣбъ получить.
Лан улҳҳшн лҳҳһа дһа	Невѣсту выбирай по матери.
Аэша аша давзоуп, агула агу	Братъ подобенъ крови, сосѣдъ сердцу.
Апһсуа іла кһіра даһовон	Абхазецъ за посмотрѣнье подачки требовалъ.

Ахабж апҳэ „хабж" вов ізһоом	Раньше опаршивѣвшаго о „парши" (его) никто не скажетъ.
Ач зн ілапҳсахооіт, зн ібапҳсахооіт	Лошадь цѣнятъ то въ собаку, то въ свинью.
Аӡбра ізцмгһз іпһнӡа ітһіааіт	Кому претила чабера *), у того она въ носу выросла.
Адз эпһнуу апһан ідрвоіт	У воды живущій и бродъ знаетъ.
Ажа атартһа соур аһртһа іш соурэ аһэіт	Говорилъ заяцъ: „пріютъ-бы имѣть, а кормъ я найду".
Абзіа ун адз іатһ, ідзвом	Твори добро, (такъ хоть) въ воду окуни, не пропадетъ.
Ваапҳэ ікаһаво уіхмччан	Кто упадетъ предъ тобой, надъ тѣмъ не смѣйся.
Абнат арбагһі іаан авнт арбагһі іканацоон	Съ-чужа пѣтухъ пришелъ и домашняго (своего) сталъ прогонять.
Аӡла шатһала іглоуп, аов вала дqоуп	Дерево держится корнями, человѣкъ друзьями.
Ага-бгһіці ашха-бгһіці эініовоіт	Горные и равнинные листья повстрѣчаются.
Абват авн івназгі абвӡмгһк ігхэіт	Въ мѣдномъ домѣ живущему не хватило мѣднаго гвоздя.
Апһша іаанагаз адз іагэіт	Вѣтромъ принесенное водою унесено (т. е. легко добытое скоро пропадаетъ).
Адз штһрала іцооіт	Вода по руслу идетъ (бѣжитъ).
Ала эннӡа, абга шарцара іргоон	Собака подохла, на охоту шакала взяли.
Ахрзамана qалооіт эврһа, ахваӡ ала тһнахіт; ахрзамана qамлэіт, іара ілашн адіун іаакһухэіт	Боясь свѣтопреставленія, червь ослѣпилъ себя; свѣтопреставленія не случилось, и слѣпой червь достался землѣ.
Адагһі сзтһоу: адз зэгі ірэіһандаз аһэіт	Лягушка сказала: „пусть воды гдѣ я живу, будетъ больше всего".
Апһагэ анца діцмгһуп	Гордаго Богъ не любитъ.
Апһагэра мдрроуп	Гордость есть невѣжество.

*) Satureia hortensis или Thymus Serpyllum.

пhскі эікhваhаіт	Живой и мертвый столкнулись.
змаз іаб іпhсхугі, іаб іпhсху-іуіт; эгі змамз іаб іпhсхугі ıвуіт	Имущій по отцу и прадѣду справилъ поминки, а неимущій и по отцу не могъ ихъ справить.
мамз арбагhі цагhвара іігоон	У кого не было быка, (тотъ) пѣтуха бралъ для паханья.
баква ча зшхэда?	Не видавъ оленя, кто его убивалъ?
шаqа. ітаз аqара івіт	Заяцъ, сколько прыгалъ, столько и бѣгалъ.
ду харпhуп.	Что на кожѣ(тѣлѣ),то и рубашка.
дмпhсц упhа думрӱан	У кого (самого) не умеръ сынъ, тому не давай оплакивать твоего сына.
ра умбац іажра вахмччан	Не смѣйся надъ старостью того, чьей молодости не видѣлъ.
ах іахівоіт	Насмѣшка возвращается насмѣшнику.
дасуу іца дасвоіт	Когда загремитъ (громъ), всякій бьетъ палкой по своему амбару.
ıлала іввоіт	Лошадь по породѣ бѣгаетъ.
: пhсвам, шаж баавом	Старая кровь не умираетъ, не гніетъ (относится къ кровомщенію).
ца аqвара ікhухвлооіт	Несчастнаго (неудачника) на берегу воды застигла ночь.
абаху ацгушван, абаху ıдрамт	Заяцъ на скалу пенялъ, а скала (про то) и не вѣдала.
алаба ілкшан дэгіӱван	Ціра (имя женщины) палкой дралась, да (сама) и плакала.

116

116 TEXTS--a full set of pages from each processed source, arranged in page order, as a means of establishing the context for any particular slip. Sets are arranged in the numerical order of the sources. See also:

Literary texts 639

2: Byhan E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz RI3

Caucasians, East and North Russia, Finland:
I. The Caucasian Peoples
[Kaukasien, Ost- und Nordrussland, Finnland:
I. Die kaukasischen Völker]

by Arthur Byhan

Stuttgart: 1926
Illustrierte Völkerkunde
Vol. 2, Part 2, pp. 749-844

Translated from the German by Robert B. Lees

Human Relations Area Files

1962

[Title page]

2: Byhan--i E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz RI3

Table of Contents

Map ii

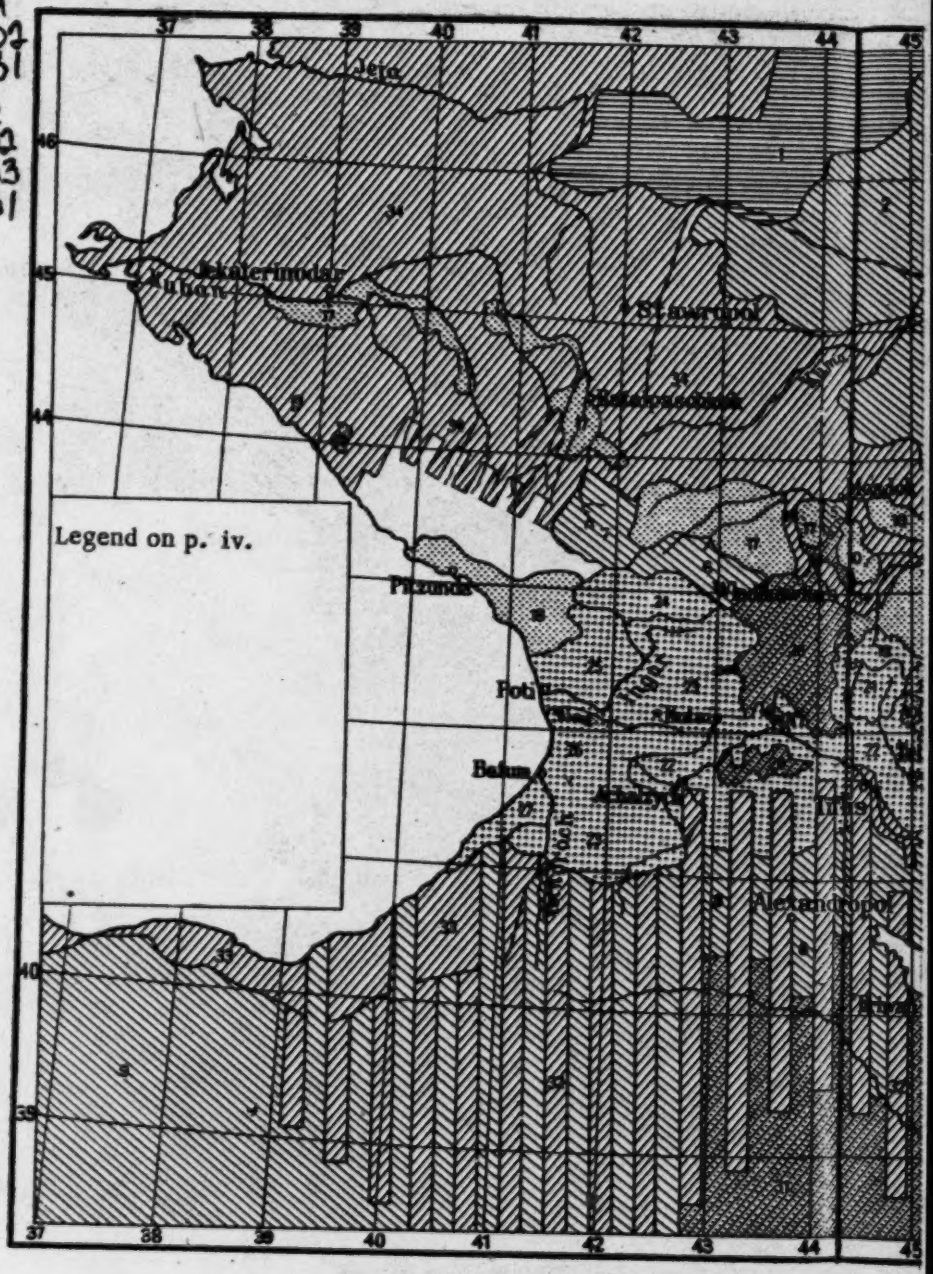
I. The Caucasian Peoples

1. The Geographical Relations of the Caucasians [untranslated]
2. The Physical Nature, Languages, and Organization of the Caucasian Peoples [untranslated]
3. The Old Caucasian Peoples 1-65
   a. The Karthvelians [untranslated]
   b. The Cherkess and Abkhaz 1
   c. The Chechen and Lezgin 31
4. Indo-Germanic Peoples 66-99
   a. The Osset 66
   b. Other Iranians, Indians, etc. 96
5. Semitic Peoples 99-108
   Mountain Jews 99
6. Turkic Peoples 109-122
   a. The Mountain Tatar 109
   b. The Kymyk [Kumyk] 118

2: Byhan--ii E-4 (no date) 1926 RI13 Abkhaz RI13
Caucasia RH1

A
107
131

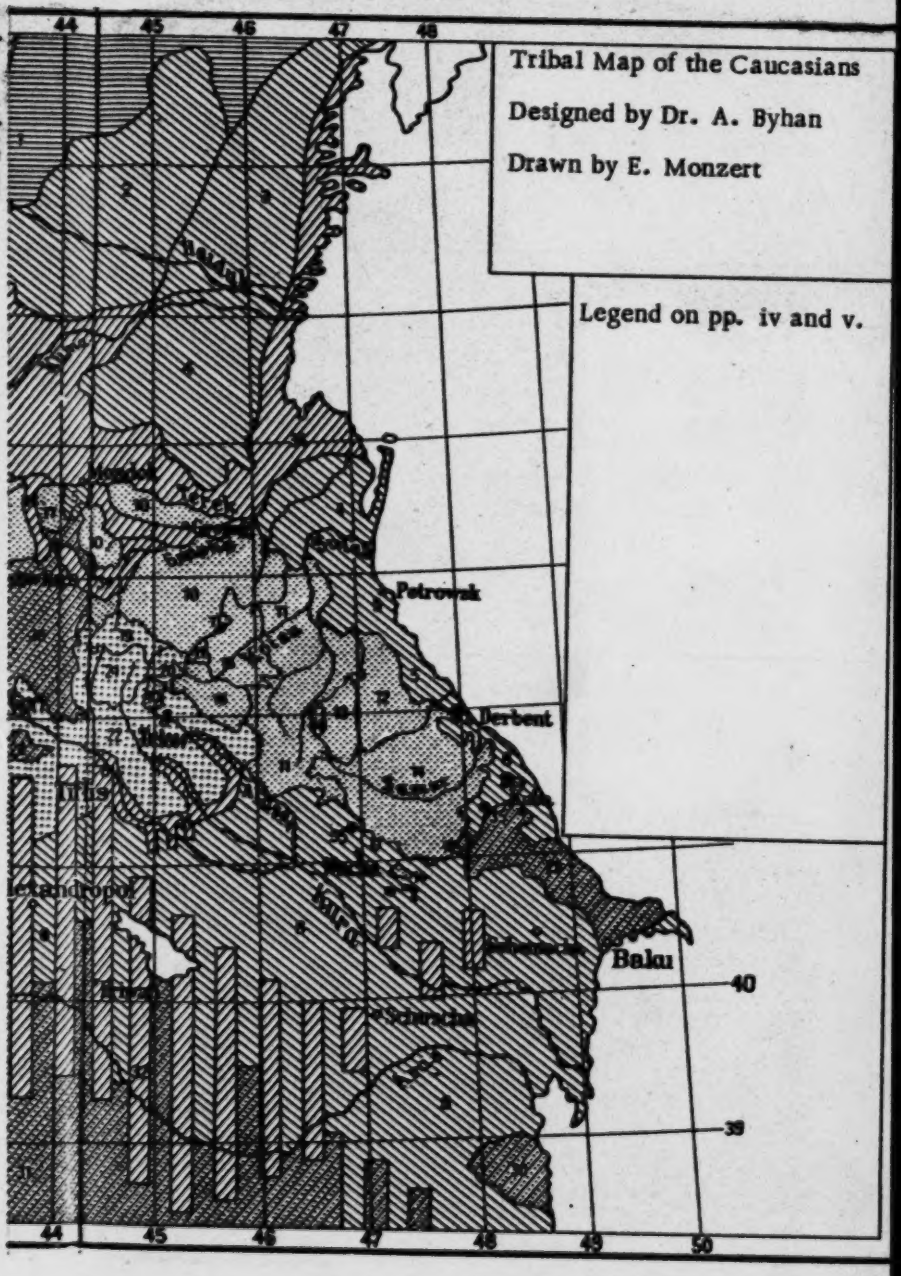
C
107
133
131



2: Byhan--iii E-4 (no date) 1926

RI13 Abkhaz RI13
Caucasia RII

A
107
131
C
102
133
131



[p. 749 (B)]

A
102
131
C
102
133
131

MONGOL:

1 Kalmyk

TURKS:

2 Turkmen /Turcoman/
3 Kirgis /Kirgiz/
4 Nogai
5 Kymyk /Kumyk/
6 Taulu
7 Karatschai /Karachai/
8 Aserbaidshan Tatar /Azerbaijani Tatar/
9 Osman

CAUCASIANS:

10 Tschetschen /Chechen/
LESGHIER: /Lezgin/
11 Awar /Avar/
12 Dargin /
13 Lak /Lek/
14 Kürin /Kurin/
15 Andi
16 Dido /Didol/

---

17 Tscherkess /Cherkess/
18 Abchas /Abkhaz/

KHARTHWELIER /Karthvelians/

19 Chewsur /Khevsur/
20 Thusch /Tush/
21 Pschaw /Pshav/
22 Georgier /Grusians/
23 Jmerier /Imeretin/
24 Swan
25 Mingrel
26 Gurier /Gurian/
27 Las /Laz/

A
102
131

INDO-EUROPEAN:

JRANIER /IRANIANS/:

C
102
133
131

28 Ossen /Osset/
29 Tat
30 Talysch /Talysh/
31 Kurd

32 Armenians
33 Greeks
34 Russians

SEMITES:

35 Mountain Jews

2: Byhan--2 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz RI3

[750]

142
691
309
516

Fig. 441. Abkhaz (From Count J. Zichy)

[749] b) The Cherkess and Abkhaz

C 101 The Cherkess are called Kerketai, Kerketioi, Kerketaioi, A Syndyi, Zygoi, Zinchoi by the Latin and Greek authors of 101 antiquity; the Abkhaz are called the Apsil by Pliny (29 to 70 A.D.) and Arrian (100 to 160 A.D), Ap'sili and Ap'sari in A 698 Georgian chronicles: Abkhazia was dependent on Georgia dur- 175 ing the first few centuries after Christ and afterwards on Lazia; in 786 it became an independent kingdom and was united again with Georgia by Bagrat III (980 to 1014) by marriage. Later it again achieved independence under the house of Shervashidze until the Russians occupied it, first the southern part, Samurzakhan, C in 1845, and the rest of Abkhazia in 1863. The Cherkess are 101 supposed to have occupied the northern foreland to a point be- 698 yond the Kuma, but later [750] [Fig. 441 appears here] to have been pushed back over the Terek, the Kuban, and the Malka rivers by the Tatars and, since 1777, by the Russians. As a result of the Tatar pressure the Cherkess tribes along the coast of the Black Sea had moved from there in the fourteenth century and pushed in among the Nogai, Karachi, and Taulu, in the Kabarda district, from which they derive their present K name. After the suppression of the revolt in Dagestan and, in 167 the autumn of 1864, the decisive defeat of the Cherkess, who had been offering stubborn resistance for decades, most of them, over 400,000, emigrated together with many Abkhaz, including the entire Ubykh tribe, to Asia Minor, Syria, and the Balkan peninsula.

A 142 [751] The Abkhaz (see Fig. 441) are physically of medium height, powerful build, and wiry. The skull

A 142 [751 cont.]
is somewhat flattened, the nose short, straight or arched, the color of the face pale brown, and that of the eyes, hair, and beard dark brown to black. Blue eyes and light hair are rare.
A [143] The southern Samurzakhan show admixture with Georgians (Mingrel); they are taller, more powerfully built, and have more delicate features.

C 142 The Cherkess (see Fig. 442) are taller than the Abkhaz, slender, and have broad shoulders and narrow hips. The skull is of medium size and pear-shaped, the nose thin and straight. The face is oval; the hair and eyes are brown. The girls and young women are famous for their beauty.

A C 181 The Cherkess are proud, vengeful, cunning, insolent, good fighters, indefatigable on horseback and on foot, certain marksmen, and were formerly notorious as savage bandits. The

C 291 142 302 411

Fig. 442. Cherkess
(From R. v. Erckert)

A 181 [751 cont.]
Abkhaz are similarly endowed, but are distinguished from the former by greater irritability, instability, garrulity, politeness, and, like the Mingrel, are notorious thieves. [Fig. 442 appears here.]

A 101 [621] [619] The Abkhaz now consist of 24 or 25 kin groups or communities; as tribes, the following have been mentioned earlier: the Ubykh between Khamise and Shakhe, the Abadzekh between Pshekups and Byelaya, the Dzhigeth between Shakhe and Mzymta; farther south up to the Bzyb, the Bzubb, up to the Kodor, the true Abkhaz, and in their hinterland the Tsebeldin; up to the Galisga, the Abshav and, bordering on Mingrelia, the Samurzakhan.

A 99 177 [302] Dress. The Abkhaz women wear Cherkess, or nowadays usually European, clothing (see Fig. 443), the men the Cherkess coat (see Fig. 441); they usually shave the head bare.

C 291 The Cherkess attire for men has spread widely among the Cossacks and [752] [Fig. 443 appears here] through all of

C 1099 Caucasia as far as the lowland Georgians in the south, and the women's attire has been adopted by the neighboring Abkhaz, Karachai, and Osset. The men's costume (see Fig. 442) consists of a short (yana) of white linen or red taffeta, baggy pants, a silk embroidered undergarment with a collar, a long robe (tsié) open at the chest, made of black or gray cloth, with cartridge pockets (khazyr) on the breast, narrow belt strap, leather leggings, sandals of leather or linden bark, cap (papakh) of white or black sheepskin (see Fig. 444), and in addition, for bad weather, a black coat (tsauka, burka) of goat and sheep wool,

C 302 with a hood (g'etapt) that is draped around in such a manner that the right arm remains free. They cut their hair off short,

C 911 leaving only a braided tuft (haidar). Out-of-doors they carry a dagger (kama, see Fig. 449) on the belt, and from a sword-belt they hang a saber, the blade of which is often Damascus,

C [439] [495] Khorassan, Hungarian, or Lezgin work and which is often inlayed with silver or gold on a black background, as are also the studs of the horse's harness and other parts of the armament. This further consists of: pistol (see Fig. 450), flintlock rifle with

A 291 192

[752 cont.]

Fig. 443. Abkhaz Woman

C 411 [439] octagonal damascened barrel, in earlier times imported from Bakhchisarai in the Crimea, in a sheath of skin, leather, or felt (see Fig. 451, 1), or a knout (see Fig. 451, 8, 10). C 714 411 Earlier it also included (see Fig. 445) a shirt of mail (affé) with a cotton lining, [Fig. 444 appears here] [753] arm bands (abkhumbukh), hand guard (ašteld), helmet (taš) or skullcap (kip'a), battle-ax, javelin with barbs, bow, quiver, C [664] and arrows. Only the nobles were permitted to use white eagle feathers for feathering the arrows.

A 291 The parts of the women's costume are (see Fig. 446): a thin shirt of red silk (kanaûs) with long sleeves, over that an undergarment of striped silk with sleeves that are narrow at the top, wide at the bottom, and pleated, over it a bodice with [Fig. 445 appears here] gold and silver embroidery and lacing of silver balls and plates, and a long coat with a wide richly decorated piece of material set in at each sleeve, pants usu-

K [291] ally of yellow silk, (formerly among the Abkhaz, white for girls, red for women, blue for widows), leather belt with

Fig. 444. Kabardin Cap of Lambskin (From Count J. Zichy)

[753 cont.]
silver and gold studs, shoes of soft leather and gold or silver embroidered, pointed overshoes with thick soles and high heels, on the head a 15-centimeter-high conical cap of silk richly ornamented with gold and silver lace, buttons, plates, and chains, and finally a white interwoven veil which hangs far down from the cap. The braid of hair is entwined with white stripes of

Fig. 445. Cherkess fully armed, with Woman and Girl. Domed tents in background. (From Spencer, 1837.)

cotton that hang down to the feet. Under the shirt the girls always wear a tight bodice of leather that is not taken off until the wedding.

Dwelling. The farmsteads of the Abkhaz do not lie next to one another as in a village, but are widely scattered and hidden in the dense tree-growth of the gardens in the vicinity of a spring or brook. The newer houses are [754] made of planks on piles, in the style of the Mingrel or Imeretin. The older huts are the most primitive in all the Caucasian forest regions and resemble the huts in the summer encampments of Macedonian shepherds.
[Fig. 446 appears here.]

KAC 291 K53 142

[754 cont./

Fig. 446. Kabardin Woman (From Count J Zichy)

A 342

The main house (p'ats'kha) is rectangular; the walls are merely plaited twigs and even in winter are only rarely covered with ferns. The flat or slanted thatched roof is supported at the front door by two inclined posts (amakratl-khkwa = scissors) meeting at the top, one post in the back wall, and four corner posts standing at a distance of some 30 to 60 centimeters from the house. The front part is the living space; the back part, partitioned off, is reserved

A [754 cont.]
for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whetstone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons hang on the walls.

Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

[755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork, plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press, barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an outside wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

[See top of this page--Analyst]

[755 cont.] In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep and goats and the [756] granary (see Fig. 248 [in untranslated portion]), which rests on six posts one and a quarter meters high and covered with flat stones and on four beams, supported by six smaller stones, the interior of which is divided into four compartments for the various kinds of grain; otherwise the grain is also stored (as in Albania) in pear-shaped pits, lined with hay and closed off with boards and earth. The fenced fields adjoin the yard, which is fenced in by a plashed hedge.

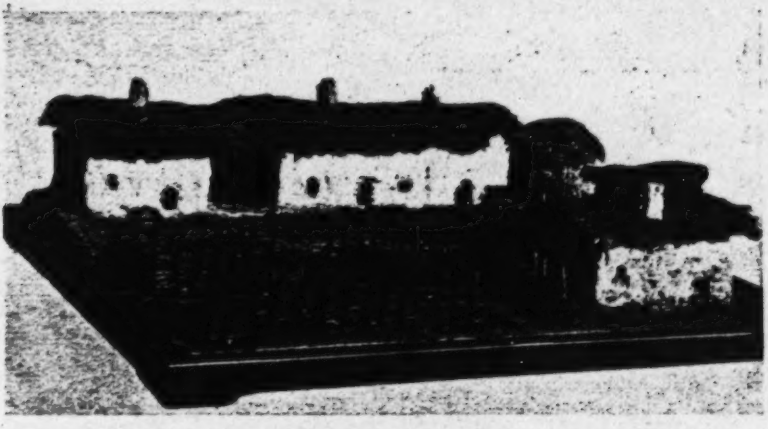


Fig. 447. Cherkess Farmstead in the Village Biberd (Model in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

In earlier times, when the Cherkess were continually engaged in battle with the Tatars and the Russians, they were more closely united. The houses formed a circle of 40 to 50, in the middle of which [Fig. 448 appears here] the animals and unarmed persons were sheltered at night. The latrine huts stood about 15 meters from the houses. The villages in the Temirgoy (K'emirkwehe) district on the middle Kuban were surrounded by a double paling three meters high, with an earth filling one and a quarter meters wide, in which embrasures had been left. On the inside a roof of reed or straw ran around it, under which the field implements and the livestock were placed. The narrow entrance-gates in the entrenchment were barricaded with wooden blocks and two-wheeled carts. The entrenchments that the peasants erected in their fields were

C 712 [756 cont.] laid out similarly, except that they had wickerwork instead of poles. The shepherds built themselves watchtowers, resting on four piles, made of beams eight meters high laid horizontally on top of one another, which likewise were provided with embrasures.

C 726 342 [177] On their war and raiding expeditions the Cherkess used tents which they had probably borrowed from the neighboring Tatars. The simpler ones consisted of two inclined poles bound together at the top, over which the felt coverings were hung, and the supporting ropes were made fast in the woods on any convenient root. The better-equipped ones had the beehive shape of the Tatar-Mongol tents (Vol. II, I, Figs. 231, 232); they were [757]

C 342 351 343

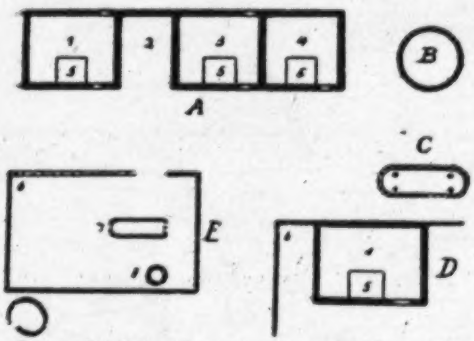


Fig. 448. Ground plan of a Cherkess farmstead in the village Biberd. A Dwelling: 1, 3, and 4, rooms with (5) fireplaces and chimneys of wickerwork, 2 open room; B, small wickerwork stable with thatched roof; C, wickerwork maize-granary on piles; D, house with fireplace (5) and chimney, serving as winter stable, surrounded by a plashed hedge (6); E, fenced-in barnyard with troughs (7 and 8).

C 726 342 [350] draped on the inside with rush-mats and carpeted with rugs, had a smoke-hole at the top, and probably also had lattice-work and a stable roof framework like the aforementioned central Asiatic tents.

A 233 Domestic economy. Until recently the Abkhaz engaged principally in animal husbandry, although the climate is

A [757 cont.]
233 unfavorable for it, for example, the cattle are therefore small. The herdsmen wandered with the stock from pasture to pasture, and from time to time built [Fig. 449 appears here] anew their
A wickerwork huts (see above, p. 6), which they took along with
241 them. Now agriculture seems to predominate; the major crop is maize, but earlier it was spiked millet or, less often, wheat. Besides these, they also cultivate beans, flax, hemp, cotton,

C
411

Fig. 449. Cherkess dagger with bone handle, colored green, and silver studs (1/3 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A
241 tobacco (that grown in Sukhumi is known as the best in the Caucasus), rice, climbing cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, many grapes and fruits: apples, pears, plums, figs, chestnuts,
A pomegranates, nuts, and others. Berry bushes grow on the slopes
222 in great number, but their fruit is almost never used in the economy, as in Georgia.

[757 cont.]

K 233 The Kabardin still occupy themselves principally with the raising of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses, which have Arabic blood, are taller and more powerfully built than the C Abkhaz horses, and are famous for their beauty and endurance. 241 The other Cherkess have changed over more to agriculture since the end of the fighting with the Russians.

They clear the land that they wish to seed, burn off the grass in the spring, as is also done on the pastures and meadows, and then plow and harrow with the brush-harrow [Strauchegge] (see above, p. 686 [untranslated]); until recently there was no fertilization with manure. Earlier, when the land around a village was exhausted, they merely dismantled the huts and settled in another place.

C 256 While the grain is ground in a water or horse mill, millet is husked by means of a pitted surface [Anke] (see above, p. 693 [untranslated]) and a wooden disk turned by hand, as is customary in Finland, and ground with a hand-mill by the women.

C A 231 Bees are often kept here, as in Abkhazia.

The beehives resemble those commonly used by us; they are cut out of linden bark or plaited out of willow twigs and smeared with clay and cow manure. As protection from the rain, a thick straw plaiting is laid on top. [758] Swarms that have flown out are caught with a bark cover fastened on a stick. In July and August, the hives are placed in the forests of the foothills, otherwise near the villages.

A C 462 The women have the same tasks as among the mountain peoples; among the Abkhaz, however, the men help in A C [281] the fields, fruit orchards, vineyards, and at other tasks. Among other things, the women also produce morocco leather (tsuš), from which belts, shoes, bedding, etc. are made. Besides ves- A C [417] sels and utensils, the men carve beautiful spoons out of wood and [493] horn, build wagons (ǯkū) with two disk-wheels that are hewn out of a single piece of wood and the axle turns with them (cf. Fig. 416 [in untranslated portion]). They used to produce their own A C [389] gunpowder, leeching the saltpeter (gin-khuš = powder-salt) for it from sheep manure. [Fig. 450 appears here.]

[758 cont.]

Silversmiths and blacksmiths are almost the only artisans; the former occupied themselves earlier with the ornamentation of weapons in particular; the latter, of whom there are two or three in every village, make dagger blades, sickles, bits for horses, horseshoes, and the like. Among the Abkhaz their profession is particularly honored and esteemed (see p. 25 , cf. Africa).

In earlier times trade was based exclusively on barter. Before the incursion of the Russians (end of the eighteenth century), the Cherkess traded salt, among other things, to the Osset, bringing it on large, two-

Fig. 450. Cherkess pistol with flintlock, bone pommel, and silver fittings (1/4 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

wheeled carts, drawn by six to eight oxen, from the salt-lakes along the Caspian Sea between Terek and Kuma. As products of their industry they sold principally wax, honey, skins, cloth, capes, and the like, as well as slaves. Linen material in pieces the size of a shirt served as a measure of value for all wares.

At that time the men, when not engaged in war, devoted themselves by preference to hunting and raiding. In order not to be understood by other people, and also to confuse the game, two kinds of secret language were used: the words in the one (šakobže) are completely different from the Cherkess language; in the other (farsipse) a ri or fe is inserted after every syllable.

[759] [Fig. 451 appears here.]

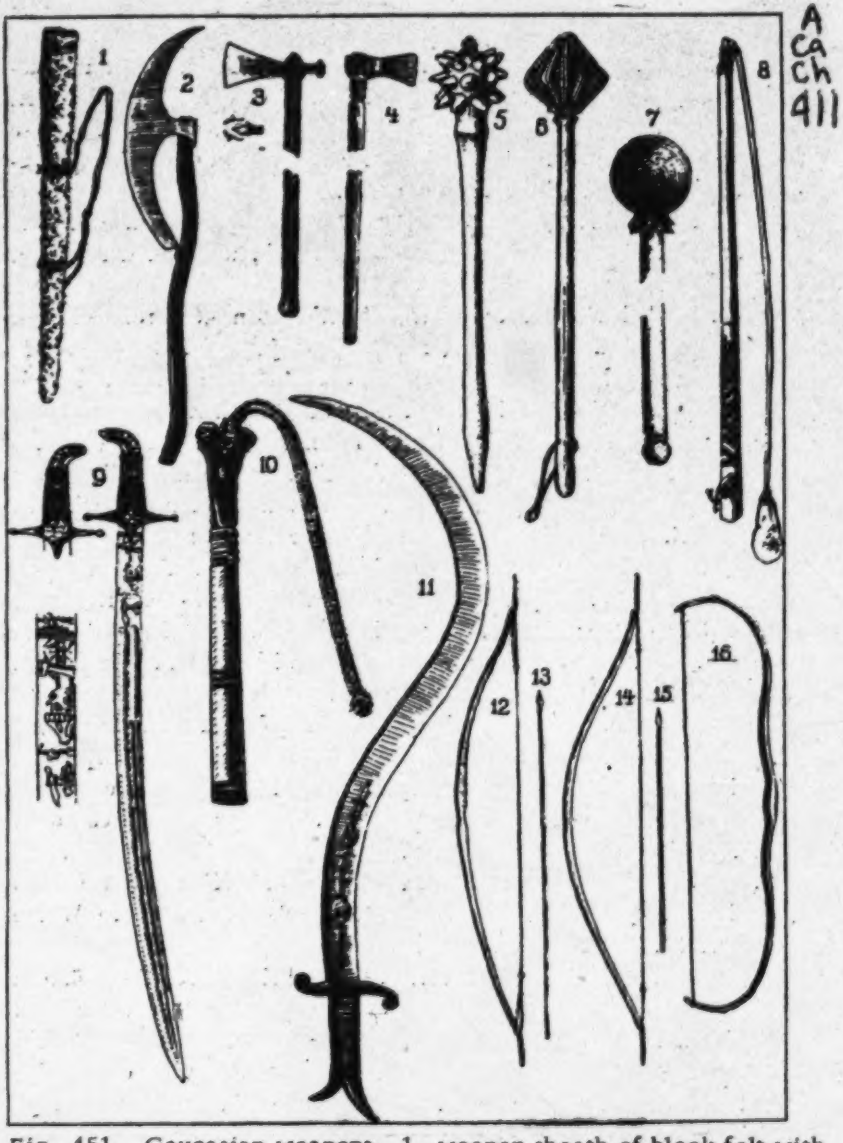


Fig. 451. Caucasian weapons: 1, weapon sheath of black felt with leather fittings; 2, 3, 4, battle-axes with iron blades and wooden stocks; 5, 6, 7, clubs with iron heads; 8, knout with handle decorated with silver; 9, sword with Georgian inscription; 10, knout with plaited leather cord; 11, saber (allegedly Armenian); 12, 14, bows with string of twisted hemp rope; 13, 15, arrows with iron points; 16, bow of horn and bone (Turkish style) (1, 1/22 nat. size; 2-4, 1/10 nat. size; 5-10, 1/7 nat. size; 9, 1/9 nat. size; 12, 14, 16, 1/16 nat. size; 13, 15, 1/15 nat. size) (From Count J. Zichy).

[760] Food. The daily dishes of the Abkhaz are cornmeal mush (abysta), which is eaten with strips of cheese instead of a spoon, sour milk, and millet prepared with cheese (ačladž) or with milk and cheese (ačamukhkua). In the winter they often eat meat, especially goat. As everywhere, red pepper, garlic, and bitter herbs serve as seasonings. The women cook cone-shaped breads (arvasa) in milk for festive days and in water during fasts.

Like the Abkhaz, the Cherkess like to eat raw cucumbers with butter, salt, and red pepper, cooked young pumpkins, carrots, wild asparagus, dandelions, and other vegetables; also much rice and thick, stiff mush (pasta) made of wheat grains cooked without salt; formerly it was more often made of unhulled millet (pasta) or hulled millet (hatlama). Flat cakes (medžaga) of ground millet were also baked. Mutton and beef is often eaten with a gravy of sour milk and grated garlic (tusluk) or of honey and butter (fau'tgo). Sour milk (škau), curds, and cheese fill out the daily fare. Festive dishes are: spelt noodles with diced, hardboiled eggs, curds, sour milk, some butter, onions, and garlic (khinkal); flat cakes of wheat flour, eggs, and milk, simmered in butter (širaldama); small cakes of the same dough filled with curds and onions or with honey (haliva), dried apples, apricots cooked in wine and honey, and other fruits, etc.

Festive drinks are: whisky (arka, fada fitsa = black F.), mead (fada pliš = red F.), millet beer (fada khuš = white F.), honey water (fau'uš), cooked cider with added honey, raisins, and blackberry juice, beer (šur), light and heavy wines from wild and cultivated grapes.

Society and family. As among other mountain peoples (see p. 732 [untranslated]), so also among the Abkhaz the father (awn aihab) and the mother (awn aihab ap's) of the house manage the affairs of the kin group [Sippe] and perform the cult ceremonies. They have a peculiar custom: an adult can be adopted by another kin group as though he were a child if he has kissed the mother of the house on the breast three times.

Up to 1866 the same positions existed among the Cherkess as among the Osset: princes (pši), noblemen (work), who were followers of the former in battle; those freed by the princes

[760 cont.]

C 565 and noblemen and who had thus [761] become noble themselves; C [566] and serfs (tšo'kŏtl). The last were either peasants and could not be sold individually, or they were servants and were sometimes freed (begaulia). The peasants had to attend to the needs and obligations of the nobles, and these to those of the princes, but in return received gifts from them. In the case of disputes and C [607] on important occasions, princes, noblemen, and respected peasants took council together. This feudal system was most highly C [197] developed in Kabarda, and the Kabardin were the teachers of the neighboring peoples as far as mode of living, horsemanship, A [565] dress, and weapons were concerned. A pronounced aristocratic pride prevailed among the Cherkess, and their noblemen considered themselves as high as the princes of the Abkhaz and others. Therefore, at marriage the greatest weight was placed on equality of birth; sons of the princes by serf girls could become princes only through marriage with princesses, and then only princes of third degree.

C 439 The Cherkess sold many of the serfs and slaves to Turkey, [567] where the Cherkess women were sought for their beauty; they [565] were never daughters of the princes or noblemen, however, who were only to be won by their peers through marriage and bride price, but rather, except for personal slaves, they dealt in C [440] Abkhaz women and captives from the Cossacks and other enemy 591 peoples. Slaves could achieve freedom through marriage to a Cherkess woman or through adoption; this was accomplished by having the slave, as mentioned above, suckle at the breast of the woman in question in the presence of the senior member of the kin group (cf. p. 76).

A 583 Marriage. Up to fifty years ago among the Abkhaz the young men, accompanied by friends, used to steal a girl of equal rank whom they desired as a wife. Today the abduction A [584] takes place by an understanding with the girl or her parents, but usually the suitor works through a mediator (dade) or female matchmaker and pays a purchase price, besides the reciprocal gifts. Refusal of the offer results in abduction or alienation of the kin group.

A 585 After the betrothal banquet the groom remains for three days in the bride's house or in the vicinity, but he may not

A 585 [761 cont.] eat with her people or show his face, which he conceals with the hood of his coat. The bride now stays for a time in a special hut (amhara), after which a feast is arranged and she is blessed by the father of the house; the same is done for the groom when he returns to his father's house (apʻkhašarkhe = removal of shame). The customs at the wedding, which takes place after the trousseau is completed, are almost the same as among the Osset (see p. 76). The young bride continues to live in the aforementioned small hut and may not speak with anyone. The young married couple may not visit the parents of the groom at the same time for several years afterward, and the two of them may never eat with them at the same time. The man may never utter his wife's name, nor she that of her husband or those of his relatives, in front of others.

A [606] [593] [602] [551]

C 583 582 [762] Among the Cherkess, too, girls are seldom stolen now; the bride is acquired for money and animals. The men marry from fifteen to twenty-five, the girls from twelve to sixteen years of age. During courtship (nakekh) the priest (mollah) completes the marriage contract after closure of the sale, as among the Mohammedan Abkhaz, whereby he joins the hands of the representatives of the bride's people. About two months later the purchase price is turned over, and soon thereafter the two- to three-week wedding festivities take place, with which are associated several peculiar customs preserved best in Kabarda.

A 584

C 585

The custom is so closely connected to the former abduction and defense by the kin group that, after the appearance of the bride, her mounted escorts defend themselves with their knouts against the youths, who stand in front of the house and attempt to unhorse them with poles until they succeed in jumping over the fence and gaining entrance to the house.

The groom is taken in for the wedding days as a "foster-son" (kan) by another kin group, from which he is assigned an escort (šatso-kot) of his own age, who attends him, hides him, since he is not allowed to meet older men until the "reconciliation" (see below), watches near him during the night, and rides about with him in the daytime in the hill pastures; here he gives him animals (šaga = for roasting), which he gives his people and

[762 cont.]

585 his "foster parents." On the wedding day, at midnight, the escort takes him to the bride, who shows no more fear of this escort than she would of a brother; she is then left alone by the bride's sister, and the escort remains watching near her until morning.

On the first night the young man undresses his bride, removes her veil, headdress, outer clothing, shoes, and especially the tight red-leather bodice which he must not cut open, but rather unfasten carefully at the laces on the front; in the morning he gives it to the escort, and the latter presents it to one of his sisters. He undresses his wife also on the second and third night; not until the fourth night does she undress her husband, and she may now speak with him, which she was not permitted to do earlier.

[591] The "installation" (unaĭse) of the woman in the kin
[588] group's house by the other women follows a week later; during
[591] this evil spirits are warded off by shots and cries and the woman herself is veiled and walks on stilt-shoes. She steps over the skin of a freshly slaughtered sheep to go into the house, where, without a veil, she is put against the wall, and a sweet preparation [763] of sheep-fat or butter and honey (urtsetl) is put in her mouth so that her new life will be sweet (cf. p. 77).

In the evening several days later at the "reconciliation" of the man, the parents, young girls, and older men sit apart from one another in his house. An old man calls him and, after he has been led from his hiding-place to the door by his friends, hands him a vessel of beer sweetened with honey and at the same time tells him that he need not hide himself, that he has done no wrong but rather has brought happiness to them, and that he should therefore become reconciled. His friends then feast and drink beer, and on the second day following the women and girls eat roasted and boiled chickens which the youths have collected at the various farms during the previous days.

Two days later the young men celebrate the "turning of the keys" (ĭinak-gagerŏs): from time to time several of them place themselves around a vessel filled with beer, it is then spun around, and when it stops the youth to whom the handle points

[763 cont.]

C 585 must empty it. Finally, on the same evening the old men dance at the young married couple's house, a fiddler (psinato) strikes C [583] up a tune, and several young men and girls serve; a wandering minstrel (gegwako) presents congratulatory and comic songs to the accompaniment of the two-stringed violin (see p. 30).

C 595 Polygamy is permitted among the Mohammedan Abkhaz and Cherkess--among the latter it was permitted also in the sixteenth century when they were still Christians--but nearly all of them have only one wife. She lives in a part of the house reserved for her, where the man visits her secretly at night, but she is freer and more respected than is usual in the Orient (cf. p. 709 and 732 [untranslated]). Her presence prevents manslaughter and blood vengeance, and a fugitive finds protection with her (see p. 29).

C 586 The Cherkess can declare himself free of his wife in the presence of witnesses and marry again if he leaves the purchase price with her parents. If he has merely sent her back and has not taken her back within two years, her father or one of her people go to him in order to come to an agreement about the divorce; afterwards the woman, too, may marry again.

In earlier times when a Cherkess woman committed adultery, the husband had her hair shorn, cut off her sleeves, notched her ears, and sent her on horseback to her father, who C 585 sold her or put her to death. The same fate befell the bride if her husband found that she was not a virgin; he then recovered the purchase price.

Rearing of children. The Abkhaz and Cherkess noblemen and princes do not raise their children themselves. They [764] formerly entrusted them in their third or fourth year to another nobleman or peasant, who received nothing for his efforts but the best part of the booty brought home by his ward when grown up.

C 844 Soon after birth, before which the father leaves the house for several days, princely Cherkess children are put in C 608 the care of a nurse (anadzdzey) and a foster father (abadzdzey), together with cradle, linen, clothing, wash-caldron, a buffalo,

C 608 [437] [764 cont.] cow, and other things. After two to three years they take their ward (akhup'a), together with gifts of animals and food, to the parents, who honor them and give them rich gifts. After the child comes of age, the foster-father gives him back to his parents, who give him animals, weapons, and money and honor him as a close relative. If the foster child dies before this, he buries him in accordance with custom, holds the memorial service, makes an offering, etc.; if his ward is orphaned, he also buys him a bride or induces him to abduct one.

C [867] [868] Rearing is aimed at teaching the boy good manners, perserverance, courage, bravery, skill in horsemanship, fencing, shooting, and, formerly, manipulation of the bow and skill in raiding. For his part, the ward must stand by his foster parents, search for lost property, and protect them from robbery and insult, if need be with the help of his own parents. If the foster father, foster mother, or one of their children dies, he procures the coffin, leads the interment and memorial ceremonies, and observes the rules of mourning. The foster-father's sons are his devoted friends; if one of them marries, he gives the bride rich gifts, or when one of them has abducted a girl, he takes her into his protection, and, as a prince's son, no one would seize him for it.

C [867] [868] [29] Noble girls are likewise given to foster parents, who instruct them in the manual skills of women and teach them modesty, obedience, and the like. In the seventh or tenth year, the laced leather bodice is put on them (see above, p. 18).

A C 551 The children of Christians are occasionally baptized and given a Christian name, but the name by which they are usually called is, as among the Osset, the native one chosen at birth--among the Moslems, many Tatar or Arabic ones are used. Such are, for example, Goinuqua (= fur-son), Keltšuqua (= wish-son), Keltsuqua (= wish-son), Koituqua [765] (= upside-down son), Meiremaqua (= Friday-son), T'a'šine (= lamb of God), T'agelak (fear of God), 'Adzug (= young dog), Togdžuqua (= fat-man's son); Temir (= iron), Petak (= twig), Košbaš (= double head), and the like. Feminine: Džennet (= bliss),

[765 cont.]

A 55 Devlet-khan, Tatema, Kistaman, Tepsike, Gosop'o khuraya (= round prince's-daughter), etc.

A 766 Death. In Abkhazia, when someone has been struck by lightning, he is laid in a coffin, and this is hung on a tree (as in old Lazistan, see above, p. 671 [untranslated], in Siberia, and other places), until the body has completely decayed; then the bones are buried.

C 766 In the sixteenth century the Cherkess used to seat the body of a nobleman, after having removed the entrails, on a tall, wooden bedstead in the field for a week. The two nearest relatives stood nearby, and on the bed was a girl who brushed away the flies with a silk cloth stuck on an arrow, while the first of his wives sat at his head without weeping. Afterwards the body, with clothing and weapons, was laid in a split and hollowed tree trunk, along with part of the gifts, silver vessels, bows, arrows, and the like, which relatives, friends, and serfs had brought, and set on the ground at the burial-place; over it was raised a mound whose height showed how much esteem the deceased had enjoyed. As a sacrifice for the dead, the innocence of a twelve to fourteen-year-old girl was offered, which the youths attempted to take by force as she lay on an ox-skin. After the burial a servant led the dead man's bridled horse to the grave on several days and called him to eat three times.

A 2 764 Now deceased persons are laid to rest with the assistance of a Christian or Mohammedan clergyman (mullah). The lamentation for the dead at the coffin and amidst the clothing and weapons of the deceased, the feast for the dead, etc. re-

A [171] semble the customs of the Khevsur (see p. 737 and following [untranslated]); here, however, male mourners, too, kneel at the coffin. While the body is being carried to the grave, a rope is thrown over the roof and pulled back and forth in order to determine whether the house, which has been severely shaken by the departure of the deceased, still stands firm (as in Mingrelia). In earlier times, the Cherkess also threw the right ear of his horse into the grave, after they had first put the reins into the dead man's hands and led the horse around the grave three times (cf. p. 80). The mother, the wife, and the foster

[765 cont.] The mother, the wife, and the foster mother mourn at the grave for forty days in the morning and in the evening, and for the same length of time, or sometimes for a whole year, food for the deceased is put on the table during meals.

[766] The first memorial service takes place on the fortieth day, the second one during the second year, usually in the autumn. On the evening preceding the latter (ap's-khuvra = assigning to the soul), the clothes, the horse with the saddle, and the weapons of the deceased are laid out, there is mourning in the house and at the grave, and sacrificial animals are slaughtered. A party of village members in mourning clothes and barefoot bring up animals and food; among them a man carries lighted candles on a twig-shaped holder, as do the oxen on their horns. The next day the horse of the dead man is led around in a circle three times in a field, and the relatives follow it, lamenting in mourning clothes; after this, the soul of the dead, which until then had remained invisibly among them for the time being, has finally departed from the earth. After the memorial feast the youths and men hold oratory exercises, shooting matches, and races, as among the Khevsur (see p. 738 [untranslated], and below, p.30).

The burial grounds, which contain the graves for each kin group, usually lie on elevations and are fenced in. Small houses of planks with shingle roofs--in contrast to the usual building style--are erected over the graves, which are themselves lined with boards, and fruit trees are planted nearby.

Among the Abkhaz, too, there is the belief that the souls of the dead have the same needs as the living, and for this reason they build these grave-shelters, lay slices of melon and cucumber on the graves, and for a year after death put food for them on the table during the meals. At the second memorial celebration the father of the house places in the yard a millet-dumpling over which wine has been poured and pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animal. If the souls are neglected, they come to the house at night and whistle, whereupon food and wine is given to them. When the souls, the "outer ones," are angered, they bring about weakness and sickness among animals and men. Then one tries to console

[766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

[767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

[767 cont.]

776 good and bad. The Hammerers (Ašatsatšap'atsa) decide the fate of the newborn and write it on their foreheads (lakhintsara). As nature gods they worship the protector of cattle (Aït'ar), of goats (Džabran), of wild game (Ažvepša), of the earth (Adabna), of the rainbow (Atsakwa), and the protectress of the water (Dzlan dzahwas'), of the wind (P'šarn'a), of seeds (Dž'adž'a and Anap'anga), of dogs (Ališkantra), of bees (Ananagund), and others. Just like the Osset, they have a protector of raiders (Eirig-ātsnykh) or Tšugurukhnykh) and one of smiths (Šyošu). The latter two, which are called upon very frequently, may be of a manistic type, derived from the belief in souls, as may be the protective spirit of the hearth (Aša'ara), the mother-goddess (Anana'a), and the "outer ones" (adnqa) (see p. 22). The Abkhaz attribute to the god of thunder (cf. p. 87) the same power and abilities as the Osset do to the holy Elias, but he is in part confused with the incomprehensible highest god (see p. 61) and is endowed with his abilities, and therefore also the shape of the local supreme god (Anybs-nykha-dudrūp'š), whose home is supposed to be the
224 mountain Dudrūpsh at Lykhny. ---Hunters sacrifice a male goat
[782] or a ram to the god of game (Ažvepša) before the hunt, which begins after the vintage [768] and lasts until about the new year, so that he will grant them the desired prey from his herds. He gives them, however, only those animals that he and his daughter have already eaten and that he has restored to life by wrapping
[825] their bones in the skin after his meal. White animals are the herdsmen of Ažvepša and therefore must not be slain.

Evil souls, similar to the western European vampires,
776 tear the eyes, heart, liver, etc. out of the body and suck the milk from the cows. They have different powers and accordingly ride on frogs, mice, cats, or on foxes and wolves. Their chief (Roskipi) lives on the mountain Tabakona, where every year they must account for Mary's Assumption and must exhibit the plundered body-parts. For this reason the Abkhaz put up
[788] crosses during fasts, carry lights on their heads, and on the previous night stay up and shoot and sing. The evil souls can at the same time stay among men and on the mountain Tabakona, since

A [768 cont.]
776 only their secondary souls (ap'stštšada) wander about.

A Beside their old gods, the Abkhaz worship Christ as the
[177] Holy Teacher, Mary, and St. George as the protector of the villages Lykhny (Anan-Lykhnykh), Lsā or Pitzunda (Ana-Lsānykh),
[782] and Ylori (Tsminda-Giorgi), to whom a sheep is sacrificed every year, and a calf with notched ears is donated to the churches.

C The Cherkess, like the mountain Georgians, had sacred
778 groves and trees, where in former times the public gatherings were held, where raiders found refuge, and where the spoils of the hunt and war and sacrificial offerings were hung. Also individual springs and mountains, certain stone columns (cf. p. 63), and iron and stone crosses were supposed to have been considered sacred.

C The sacerdotal duties are performed by selected older
782 men; they lead the prayers and slaughter the sacrificial animals, sheep, lambs, goats, oxen, in the sacred groves before the cross, after having previously singed them on the neck with a pine-torch and poured millet-beer over them (cf. below in Section III, 1b: Cheremis [untranslated]). The head of the animal is hung up on a tree for the god, the priest receives the skin, and the meat
C is eaten by the believers, who entertain themselves on festival
[796] days with feasts, dancing, drinking, races, tournaments, and the like.

C [769] The gods of the Cherkess are almost the same as
776 those of the Abkhaz; they have a supreme being (T'ka) who reigns over the heavens; a god of the smiths (Tliebske), the protectors of agriculture (Yemikha, Skus'kha, Naokhatkha); the guardian of the forests (Mezitkh, Mezetkha), who rides on a boar with golden bristles and whose daughters milk the does; the lord of the bees (Merissa or Mereïme); three sisters who watch over domestic life, warriors in battle, and the traveler on his way; the god of the winds and waters (Seozeres), and others.

C At the beginning of spring, a three-day celebration is
796 held in honor of the last god, during which a dry pear-tree hung with garlands and other decorations, with a cheese at the top,

C 796 C [782] [769 cont.] and lighted with lamps, is set up in the house of an elder of the kin group. An animal is sacrificed in honor of the god, and after the feast the cheese is distributed among the participants as a magical remedy. Other festivals are celebrated: for the new year and for Easter, in March, when one first fasts, then slaughters an offering in the sacred grove, and enjoys himself by shooting at eggs, etc.; at the beginning of the harvest, when roasted unripe wheat with sour milk, and later other kinds of grain and fruit, are eaten as festive dishes; in October when the plants wither, etc.

A 796 782 The Abkhaz show their reverence for the gods and spirits at given occasions or on certain holidays by the sacrificial offering of animals, milk, bread, and other things, and by prayers, which are often constructed with a wealth of words and are poetically exalted.

Thus, on New Year's Eve they kneel in prayer, sprinkling incense on a coal-pan, around a rectangular cheese-cake (suluguni)--this custom is called Kalinda, cf. the Kolinda of the Rumanians and others--and on New Year's Day the father of the house lays wheat bread with an egg baked in it on everyone's breast, and he directs the "heart-prayer" (gunykhwa) to God, that they may be protected from heart disease. On Christmas Day between the first crow of the cock and daybreak he begs that they be spared from stomach ailments; afterwards everyone eats a chicken and four small pieces of cheese-bread (kwakwari). The celebration of Syosu is also held on New Year's Eve, especially by the smiths. Here the father of the house prays to him for health and protection against harm from their work tools, and he throws into the fire pieces of curd-cake and of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animals: a sheep or calf for the father of the house, a rooster for each member of the family [Familie].

A 233 [782] C [776] A [233] Before driving the animals into the mountains and after driving them from there, the herdsmen sacrifice a ram in honor of the god of lightning (Ap'i, khakhikal = he who lives above, called Sible by the Cherkess) and pray that he spare them and their herds. When an animal is killed by lightning, [770] the owner calls out all the villagers; while singing and dancing

[770 cont.]

231 (atlar-tšoup'), they lay the animal on a quickly erected, three-
[952] meter-high framework or in a tree. The owner sacrifices an ox
and prays to be spared in the future; then they eat the meat of
the sacrificial animal, bread, and cheese, drink wine, and feast
766 the entire day. The Abkhaz proceed in the same way for a per-
son struck by lightning, but no one may weep lest the god be-
come angry (see p. 87).

789 During drought one also turns to Ap'i to send rain; an
[985] ox is sacrificed, and at the feast songs of thanks and praise
(antšva-rystšva) are sung in alternating chant. In order to evoke
rain magic similar to that customarily practiced among the
Balkan peoples is used (cf. also p. 64). The girls from the vil-
lage stricken with drought place a female doll embodying the
drought on a donkey and lead it to the river; here they put the
doll on a raft made of twigs and straw, ignite it, and allow it to
drift. They pull the donkey by force through the water, and if
he brays, there will be rain.

755 Various gods are called upon in case of illness. Ague,
[953] delirium, and the like accompanying serious illness are attributed
to the presence of the supreme god (Antsar mz) in the body of the
sufferer. In order to cure him, they sing and dance about him
[964] and even force him to do the same; then they sacrifice bread
and a goat or sheep in the vicinity of the house, during which
no woman may be present; an old man with a candle circles
the sick person and pleads with the god to forgive him and de-
liver him. He also prays afterwards to Michael-Gabriel.

In case of fever they look for help from the "Mother of
[976] the Waters"; she lives, according to them, in a clear lake or
spring, is beautiful, has brown hair and laughing eyes, and likes
to live for a while with a man, like the mermaids. An old woman
touches the water with some object belonging to the feverish
person and begs the goddess to release him if she has enthralled
him. Then she ladles up a few drops of water on some alder-
leaves and holds them over the fire in the house so that the fever
may leave as quickly as the water on the leaves. Finally the
old woman moves away quickly, with the wish that the fever, too,

[770 cont.]

755 might leave. As soon as the afflicted person is able, he himself goes to the water with a prayer-woman; there he kneels and [782] offers up a hen to the mother of the waters, a rooster to her husband, and a candle to each of them and to her female servant (Abza'avabzatšav = benefactress, intercessor). The woman prays and strokes the sick person on the back for "deliverance" (azati).

If someone suffers from jaundice or debility, [771] the "irreproachable" elders lead him to the river, lay his clothing, silver articles, etc. on both banks, and make a bridge of twisted yarn over the river; the prayer-woman then circles the sick person with a doll and prays to the rainbow in the name of the Eliap'ši, to the mother of the waters, and to her husband. She [782] casts into the water pieces of the food that was brought along: roasted chickens, tongue-shaped flat cakes, etc., and she allows the doll to float downstream in a gourd with a burning candle, while she prays that the goddess amuse herself with it rather than with the sick person. Finally she gives the latter "deliverance," and he may not look back on the way home (cf. p. 924 f. [untranslated]).

231 789 When rinderpest struck, the Kemirkehe used to dig a tunnel in a steep river-bank and in the middle of this a pit in which they fastened a black cat with a silver belt. They covered the pit with boards and earth, ignited a fire on top by rubbing two sticks together, and drove the cattle through the river and the tunnel, to the accompaniment of the priests' litany. Afterwards the cat was freed.

842 The above-mentioned threefold prayer at the water is aimed at fertility when one "leads to the water" a young woman for the first time, during which an egg is thrown in, and, in the 844 case of a woman in childbed, food for the infant.

787 The Abkhaz read signs for future events, for a favorable or unfavorable outcome for undertakings, from the stars, from [821] the form of the moon, from meeting certain animals or human beings, and also, in the manner of the Tatars, from the cracks in a sheep's shoulder-blade that has been cast into the fire (see Vol. II, p. 325).

[771 cont.]

Law. Blood vengeance is still practiced among the Cherkess (t'li'lvasa = blood price) and Abkhaz.

Formerly when a prince had struck down a peasant, his relatives could not avenge themselves on him, but rather on his foster father (cf. p. 20). The wergild was measured in "souls" according to rank, and in spans according to the size of the body; the unit of value for this was one cow (cf. p. 747 [untranslated]). A "soul" of four spans was compensated for with 30 cows, a soul of five spans with 50 cows, of six spans with 70 cows; a peasant was reckoned at five souls, a nobleman at 15 souls, a prince at 25. The wergild consisted of cows, goats, sheep, and beehives; it was increased by one span if not paid on time. If the avenger was inclined to forgivesness, he confirmed it by kissing the breast of the guilty man's mother or wife (cf. above, p. 15).

Among the Cherkess theft was expiated in the same way as among the Khevsur. The thief had to return the stolen goods and thirty oxen as well to a nobleman, and to a prince he had to replace it ninefold.

When there is a division of an Abkhaz kin group, the father of the house and the mother receive half of the total property; if the father is already dead, the mother receives the dowry [Mitgift] that has been brought in and [772] an equal portion from each son. The oldest son has a right of priority (ai'ab-šakhu) in division or inheritance, and likewise--as among the Osset--the youngest (eidzb-šakhu); the farm, among other things, falls to the latter, the rest being equally divided among the other children, with the daughters receiving less. Among the Cherkess the eldest son had to care for his unmarried sisters; for this he received the bride-money (see p. 16) when he had them marry.

A peculiar oath of purgation is customary among the Abkhaz; the accused strikes the anvil three times with the hammer in the smithy and says that the god of the smiths may smash his head if he is guilty. Or he goes [Fig. 452 appears here] between two loaded rifles three times and challenges the god to shoot him in the head if he is lying.

[772 cont.]

C 533 Art and play. The old traditions of the past and of the deeds of the Cherkess were preserved by the wandering minstrels (gegwako); they used to sing of them at feasts and festivals, whereas nowadays they present hardly anything but songs of congratulation and praise and comic songs. As far as is known, the A 538 folk literature of the Abkhaz is rich in religious and festive songs and prayer formulas, and probably also in heroic and other

A [534]

Fig. 452. Guitar with two strings, Abkhaz (1/7 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A 534 songs. As accompaniment to the singing, a two or three-stringed guitar is used (Abkhaz, ap'khirtsa, see Fig. 452) or the Mingrel lute (atšangur), the handle of which is sometimes C 534 carved or shaped in the form of a head. In addition, the Cherkess still use long flutes (tšebizga) of reed or metal, with three finger-holes, and triangular harps (pšine-duk-okyo), which also occur among the Swan; they are 20 to 70 centimeters wide and have 40-centimeter-long hair strings attached to the resonator and to pegs above.

A 535 The favorite dance among the Abkhaz is the "shoulder-dance," in which the young people hold each other by the hand, [773] turn around as they sing, and from time to time leap in C 535 the air. Among the Cherkess there were girls' dances (denyola), in which they hopped in one place, round dances of men and girls (uk) combined with singing, and wild war-dances (kofa) performed by a single fully-armed man.

A 536 The principal amusements of the men are contests of strength, stone-casting, ball-throwing, and the like. The Abkhaz used to fight duels with the sword, usually while sitting

A 516 [773 cont.]
on horseback, or they would arrange javelin battles in which, divided into two companies, they rode against one another, threw long, white sticks (džerid) at one another, and caught them in flight or picked them up from the ground (cf. p. 715 [untranslated]).

c) The Chechen and Lezgin

C 131 The territory of the Chechen takes in the forested northern slope of the mountain range that branches off from the main chain from Tebulos and Diklos toward the northeast and separates Chechnya from Dagestan, and the flatland lying in front up to the C 101 Terek. Their neighbors to the east are the Kymyk [Kumyk], to the north the Cossacks, to the west the Kabardin and Osset, to the south the Khevsur, Tush, and Lezgin. The western tribe, the Ingush, are partly cut off by a strip of Russian settlement between Vladikavkaz and Grosniy, as are the Chechen between Grosniy and Mozdok, who were settled on the Terek in 1866.

D 131 [133] [774] The Lezgin inhabit nearly treeless, barren Dagestan (= mountain country), which extends southeast of the above-mentioned mountain range up to the Baba-dagh north of Shemakha, that is, the river districts of the Samur, the Ruba, and D 101 the upper Sulak. Their neighbors to the east on the Caspian coastal plain are the Azerbaijani, Tatars, and the Kymyk, to the northwest the Chechen, to the west the Tush, to the southwest the Kakhetian Georgians, to the south the Azerbaijani, Tatars, and the Tat. [Fig. 453 appears here.]

C 175 C 48 The Georgian, Persian, Armenian, and Arabic authors report nothing about the origin of these two linguistically, but not culturally, different peoples. It is known only that since the time of Genghis Khan Mongolian and Tatar legions have been continually oppressing the Chechen and have held them subject in part until their power was broken by the Russians. They themC 173 selves give Nakhashé on the upper Argun as the tribal home of all the Chechen, and their name Nakhchuy comes from it. Popular legends speak of a man from the high Caucasus, of an Arab, and

RI3 Abkhaz
Chechen RI 5
Dagestan RH 8

C 193 [774 cont.]

others as their founder. It may in fact be assumed that many remained behind from the Georgian, Kuman, Khazar, Armenian, and other legions of the Tatar khans, but the influx of Arabs into

D 192 302 291

Fig. 453. Avar Man. (From Count J. Zichy.)

C 193 Dagestan and into Ichkeria and the frequent occurrence of the so-called Semitic or Jewish facial features (see pp. 661 [untranslated] and 98 f.) may also have contributed to the form of such legends.

D 193 The Lezgin Dargwa of Akusha and the Kazikumuk, for example, are said to have stemmed from Armenians, the Dido [Didol] from Georgians, the Avar from Syrians, and the Andi from Jews. Arabic accounts found in Khunzakh and Kazikumuk relate that, about the

D CA8 year 800, Arabs from Shirvan and Shemakha had penetrated into Dagestan (Dž̌ab-h'arbi), had poisoned the Lezgin soldiers allied with the Russians (Varing ?), and installed Moslems everywhere as rulers, for example, a Kureishit therefore called Kureiš̌-kalé) in Kaitakh, but, strangely, a Russian in Tanus in Avaria. At that time Dagestan was divided into three parts: Kaitakh (Arabic Sarakh-Karan), Avaria, and the flat country (saglun). The Kazikumuk governors (šamkhal or vali) moved their residence to Tarku near

D 648 [774 cont.]

Petrovsk in the land of the Kymyk at the end of the sixteenth century, and therefore [775] the Kazikumuk chose their own dukes (khakhlavtsi) fifty years later, who even fought successfully against the Persians in the eighteenth century.

D 142 291

Fig. 454. Avar Woman. (From R. v. Erckert.)

C 101 Besides the tribes mentioned on pages 665 f. [untranslated], the following are distinguished among the Chechen: on the Psedukh, the Karabulak (emigrated for the most part to Turkey), on the Michik and Gums the Michiko (from which comes Mitsigys, used by the Kymyk for all Chechen, and Mitso-khidz = inhabitants of the millet-territories, used by the Dargwa for the Ichkeri, and further, Jerakh, Metzkhal, Tzori, Khamkhal, Nazran, and Galash as Ingush communities or families [Geschlechter]. [Fig. 454 appears here.]

C 142 The Chechen are for the most part tall, strong, and slender; the skull is short, the face broad to oval, the nose straight and prominent, the color of the eyes dark, and that of the hair brown, but blonds with blue and gray eyes frequently occur. In the north among the Michiko, one often finds Tatar

RI3 Abkhaz
Chechen RI 5
Dagestan RH 8

C 142 [775 cont.]
facial features, in the east among the Ichkeri and Akki, Near Eastern features with thick noses and Arabic features with thin, aquiline noses. As far as intellectual qualities are concerned, D 181 the Chechen and Lezgin are intelligent, persevering, self-confident, and easily provoked; the Ingush are said to be cruel, vindictive, and rapacious.

D 142 The Lezgin, too, are not a uniform race; in the east the Near Eastern facial type appears predominately, with thick aquiline nose, projecting jaw, thin moustache, and double beard. The Kurin of Akhty, like the Khevsur, have long, pointed noses with cut-out nostrils, short face, projecting chin, deepset eyes with thick brows, very light skin color, and thick, black hair. The principal characteristic of the Kurin otherwise is a striking narrowness of the face below the nose; in addition, Tatar features also occur. In general, the Lezgin are of medium height and strong; the skull is broad to medium-long, the nose prominent and thick, the eyes dark, and the hair brown to black (see Fig. 453).

C 291 Clothing. The dress of the Chechen (see Fig. 455) consists of a linen shirt, open under garment of cotton or silk with a collar, coat of yellow, gray, or brown cloth, belt, sheepskin cap, cloth trousers, leather leggings, and shoes (tsevyak) of light leather or, for traveling, of thicker [776] [Fig. 455 appears C 302 here] buffalo leather, or climbing-shoes. The head is shaved bald, and only old men wear beards.

D 291 The Lezgin dress similarly, except that they usually look dirty and ragged. Over the shaggy overcoat, the burka, or in place of it, the Lezgin in the higher settlements wear a long sheepskin with a wide shaggy collar (see Pl. 30) 1/n and, instead of the soft leather shoes, felt boots and shoes (see Fig. 469).

C 411 As weapons, the men usually carry only the dagger, and occasionally a saber, rifle, powder horn, bullet flask, etc. (see Fig. 460). A hundred years ago the Ingush still used wooden shields, covered with leather and ornamented with iron bands, and short lances with a jointed shaft, which, when inverted, also served to prop the flintlock rifle. [Fig. 456 appears here.]

1/n [See category 116, P. 116 -- Analyst]

2: Byhan--35 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz
Chechen RI 5

291
142
302
411

Fig. 455. Ingush of the Georgian Highway. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

291

Fig. 456. Cap of black cloth, trimmed with goatskin and red leather, Chechen (1/6 natural size). (From Count J. Zichy.)

[776 cont.]

The principal constituents of female clothing are almost everywhere the same as among the Tatar women: wide trousers (formerly, as among the Abkhaz, blue, red, or white, see p. 5), shirt, blouse, and belt. The Chechen women adorn their red shirt at the breast and shoulders with colored embroidery and [777] the

Fig. 457. Kurin from Kurush on the Usun-chai, a southern tributary of the Samur. (From M. v. Dechy.)

seam of the trousers with a woven edging. They cut their hair short in front; the girls braid it in back into many small braids, the women into two braids, which they wrap heavily with ribbon. They cover the head with a cap that has coins or small metal plates sewed on it or with a cloth; many put the hair in a kind of bag (Fig. 533, No. 1 [in untranslated portion]). Their other ornaments are large rings [Fig. 457 appears here] of metal or glass, which are sewed on near the ears on the headscarf or on a band laid over the head (see Fig. 461). In the summer they go barefoot; in winter they wear felt boots, and then they also put on fur coats.

[777 cont.]

291 The blouse of the Lezgin women is usually blue, the shirt of various colors; in the Kurin lowland the shirt and blouse are short, but the trousers are very full and baggy; the shoes are [100] provided with high heels and pointed toes, indicating Persian influence. Among the Andi, Dido, northern Avar, and [301] Kazikumuk, large silver ear-hoops with a ball in the middle [778] are widely distributed as ornaments and are fastened in the same way as among the Chechen women. The uniformity of the clothing is effectively relieved by the dissimilarity of the head adornment. Over the forehead the Andi women wear a quilted sickle-shaped, roll of cloth filled with cotton, from which a wide strip of cloth goes over the back of the head and down to the back. The Dido women cover their heads with a long, blue and [Fig. 458 appears here]red striped hood, with pearls and coins, and over the forehead silver trimming and many little E-shaped, silver plates, sewed on it (see Fig. 461). Avar, Kazikumuk, and Kurin women of Arakhkul have strings of coins over the forehead under a simple headcloth, and on the breast a bib (cf. p. 883 [untranslated]) with gold and silver coins, polished buttons, and the like sewed on it, and the Avar women at Zakataly have a bucket-shaped headdress. The Dargwa women and others (see Figs. 461 and 462) wind a white cloth around the neck and over it wear a red or striped cloth which hangs far down in the back. The Archin women wind a velvet, gold and silver embroidered forehead-band under a headcloth [779] from which -- as in Macedonia -- small chains hang down; they cut their hair short, [302] the girls allowing it to grow only in front of the ears and on the forehead. Besides these head ornaments and the above-mentioned 301 earrings, the following adornment occurs: among the Kazikumuk women, a triangular neck-ornament (see Fig. 471), [Fig. 459 appears here] arm bands made of two or three twisted wires, in Kubachi (Dargwa) arm bands set with turquoise and such, large finger-rings with thick, oval stones, silver spangles on the breast among the Kurin women of Borch, and everywhere, silver belts in place of the usual woven ones.

D [779 cont.]

291 The usual footwear, especially in the higher villages, are knitted boots with thick soles (see Fig. 464) or felt ones (Fig. 469), although here and there women also wear pointed leather shoes.

C 361 Dwellings. In northern Chechnya there were no large villages (a'ul) until the time of Russian rule; previously the Chechen lived in small hamlets or on isolated farms. The

D 142 291

Fig. 458. Young Avar Women, Zakataly District.
(Photo. A. Dirr.)

C 342 houses here and in the mountains have one or two floors, are built of stone or wood in the usual manner (cf. p. 725 [untranslated]), and are whitewashed on the outside. The small villages of the C 712 Ingush and Kist are heavily fortified. Every farm is surrounded by 351 a high wall with small turrets on the four corners; inside there is C [191] a rectangular tower 20 to 25 meters high, [780] with a span or pyramidal roof, like that of the Khevsur. The lowest room, four to C 342 six meters square, serves as a stable, the upper floor serves the women as a kitchen and living-room, and the second floor, with a balcony, serves as the living quarters for the father of the house.

C [780 cont.]
343
574 Near the tower stands a one or two-story house of stone or mud bricks with one or two rooms which contain the best furnishings and are reserved for guests (see Fig. 510). [Fig. 460 appears here.]

D
361 In wildly rugged, barren, harsh Dagestan, the villages are clustered together more densely and lie terrace-like (Pl. 29) in sheltered places that are easily defended, as in the Macedonian and east Albanian mountain country. Also, the houses are built and furnished almost like the ones there.

D
192
309
291
911

Fig. 459. Dido. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

D
342 As building material, mud bricks are used in the eastern lowlands and in the river region of the lower Samur, and wood is used in the few wooded areas, for example, among the Avar families [Geschlechte] of the Antsukh and among the Andi of Kuanada, but otherwise stone with coarse mortar is used everywhere. The houses seldom stand immediately on the narrow,
D
351 steep lanes, but in a yard enclosed by a wall. Except for the yard-gate, no door or window openings lead to the outside; the latter are cut only in the inner front wall, like peepholes, and can be closed off with shutters or boards.

RI3 Abkhaz
Chechen RI 5
Dagestan RH 8

[780 cont.]

000 D 342 can be closed off with shutters or boards. Along the front side of the house (Pl. 28 and Fig. 483), above and below, is an open porch supported by wooden poles, to which there is sometimes attached a storeroom on either side of the upper floor. The roof is flat -- gabled roofs (see Fig. 465) occur only in the neighboring villages of the Zakataly district -- made of beams, poles,

C D 411 531

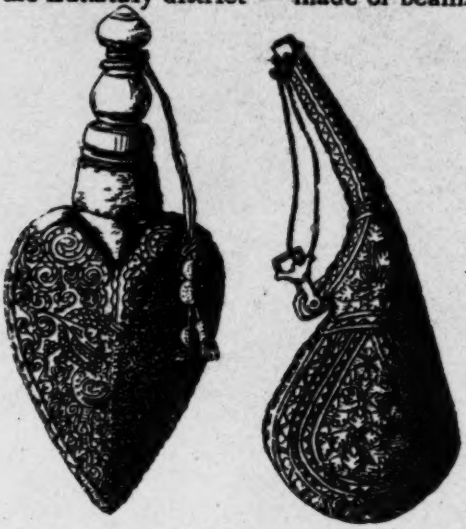


Fig. 460. Wooden powder-flask with brass mounting and leather bullet-flask (1/4 and 1/3 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.)

D 342 reed or cane, mud, and sand in layers pressed tight from time to time with a stone roller, and usually forms the front yard of the next house. For example, the Kazikumuk village Kubachi D [361] climbs up the slope in sixteen such terraces (cf. Pl. 28).

[781] The lower story is divided into stable and storage room. The upper story includes the living quarters for men and for women and the guest-room. The open fireplace with the D 354 [312] chimney hanging over it is at the wall and provides heat with wood or dung bricks. The unboarded floor [Estrichfussboden] is 000

D 352 [781 cont.] The unboarded floor [Estrich fussboden] is covered with rugs, [Fig. 461 appears here] and the walls, too, are sometimes hung with them; along the wall stand the plank-beds, clothes-chests, copper vessels, etc. Triangular stools (see Fig. D [516] 466), round armchairs, and carved benches (cf. p. 472 [untranslated]) are rare, for the people usually squat on the floor. Where

E 291 D 142

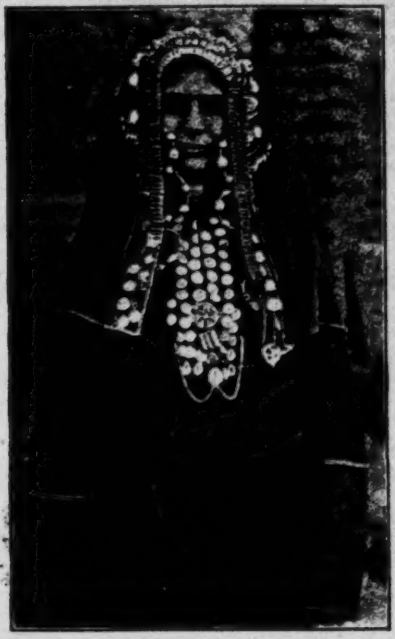


Fig. 461. Dido Woman. (From E.W. Pfizenmayer.)

D 342 where there are special women's quarters, the windows are often fitted D 345 353 with beautifully-carved shutters in oriental style. In the guest-room, pitchers, bowls, plates, and cups of copper, china, porcelain, and glass are displayed on wall-shelves as showpieces, D 354 and weapons, cloth, and rugs are hung on the walls. For illumination, resinous pine-chips, iron lamps, and oil lamps similar in form to the old Babylonian-Near Eastern lamps are used (see D 351 Fig. 470). In the partly paved yards there are summer kitchens 343 or fireplaces, granaries, and the like, the latter often placed on the roofs, as among the mountain Georgians and similarly in The Andi village Kuanada.

[781 cont.]
000 the Andi village Kuanada.

C 233 Economy. The Chechen obtain their livelihood primarily from the raising of sheep, cattle, buffalo, and horses (a hundred years ago they also still had swine); since the climate is harsh, many of them allow their sheep herds to graze in the alpine pastures only during the three summer months, and at other times in the Terek plain. Formerly, the well-to-do used to farm out their stock for the payment of [782] a certain number C 241 of lambs, calves, and foals. Agriculture in the mountains, where every suitable spot is used for laying out terraces, is not very productive, and the grain, barley, oats, and wheat, often does not ripen. There is, of course, enough land available in the lowlands, but even so, the Chechen [Fig. 462 appears here] C 256 do not give up their preference for animal husbandry. Grain is ground in the usual water-mills with a horizontal wheel; in place of the feedbox, a bark funnel hangs on four willow cords over the upper stone, and this pushes against a stick fastened to the funnel, which opens the closure of the funnel from time to time. A pointed stone on the shaft turns in the socket of another stone and acts as a pivot (see Fig. 414 [in untranslated portion]).

D 233 Animal husbandry (sheep, goats, cattle, horses, donkeys, and buffalo) predominates also in Dagestan, and, as in Chechnya, the herds remain in the high pastures only through the summer, while the men, often accompanied by women and D [349] children, spend the rest of the year with them in the Caspian coastal lands or in the southern steppes, where they dwell in simple reed huts.

D 241 In the east and south, among the Kurin and Dargwa, the nature of the soil is more favorable for agriculture than in the west, in inner Dagestan, where the terraced, often tiny fields are fenced in with stone walls, as in Karst (see p. 241 [untranslated]), and, where feasible, are irrigated artificially. D 433 The yield, however, is not sufficient to feed [783] the inhabitants, and so grain and flour must be imported from the 000 lowlands. The grain (wheat, millet, and barley) is cut with

D 243 [783 cont.]-the grain (wheat, millet, and barley) is cut with a sickle and threshed with a threshing-board (see p. 687 [untranslated]); in the winter the Andi use artificial ice surfaces as a threshing-floor, [Fig. 463 appears here] which they produce by pouring out water.

D 22 Fishing (trout) and hunting, which is still practiced occastionally with falcons by the Avar to catch hares, pheasants, and

D 192 091

Fig. 462. Uden Women. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

D 22 [231] partridges, do not play an important role economically, and the Avar and Kurin seem to keep bees only in more favorable locations.

C 262 The food of the Chechen is the usual: flat cakes of millet, maize, or barley flour, milk, cheese, onions, herbs, occasionally wheat bread, meat, eggs, and, in summer, fruit, which grows abundantly. Formerly, much black beer was drunk, but under Russian influence tea-drinking and the samovar have had a wide distribution.

C 273 272 [111]

[783 cont.]

262 The Lezgin live just as simply: during the day, on black bread of barley flour and horse-bean meal, cheese, onions, and the like. The main dish at a common meal is a kind of noodles (khinkal) cut from unleavened barley, millet, maize, or

291
351

Fig. 463. Woman and Children from Archi on the Khatar, the eastern source of the Kara-Koisu. (From M. v. Dechy.)

262 bean meal, then cooked, and, after pouring off the water, [784]
[263] served with whey or vinegar, garlic, and salted cheese. Bread is baked in a baking-pit, a mud-lined pit that is heated with
252 glowing coals, loaded, and then sealed with a lid (forerunner of the Georgian oven, see p. 685 [untranslated]). In winter much
262 wind-dried mutton is eaten in the villages whose herds graze
251 in the flatlands.

[784 cont.]

in the flatlands. The usual beverages are milk and water, and at feasts, when there are also thin wheat-cakes, pilau, meat dishes, sweets, for example, pekmez, that is, grape-juice mixed and dried with clay, and other things, spirits, cider or cooked wine, and rarely beer are drunk.

Industry. Work is assigned to men and women according to the rules of tradition (adat). The former must attend to the heavy work: building houses, felling and chopping trees, tending the animals, slaughtering, shearing sheep, plowing, mowing grass, threshing, etc. The women must take care of the household and children, do the milking, make dung cakes, clean the wool, cut the grain, and fetch water in wooden cylinders (about 30 centimeters in diameter and 60 centimeters high, see Fig. 480) or in beautifully shaped copper jugs (see Fig. 412, No. 9 [in untranslated portion]).

The products of the women's domestic work in Dagestan are: embroidery with gold and silver threads on velvet, silk, and leather; saddlebags and clothes-sacks of carpet-cloth (palas); rough grain and flour sacks of goat-hair; woolen stocking-shoes with thick soles; cords and ribbons of wool or goat-hair; saddle-pads and boots of felt or coarse wool; woven and knotted rugs of sheep wool and goat-hair -- long-haired ones especially among the Tsakhur; sleeveless overcoats of coarse wool among the Andi; fine and coarse, so-called Lezgin cloth of goat, sheep, and camel wool among the Andi, north Avar, northern Lak, and Dargwa. The Chechen women also produce rugs, felt blankets, and thin materials for clothing (tsoka).

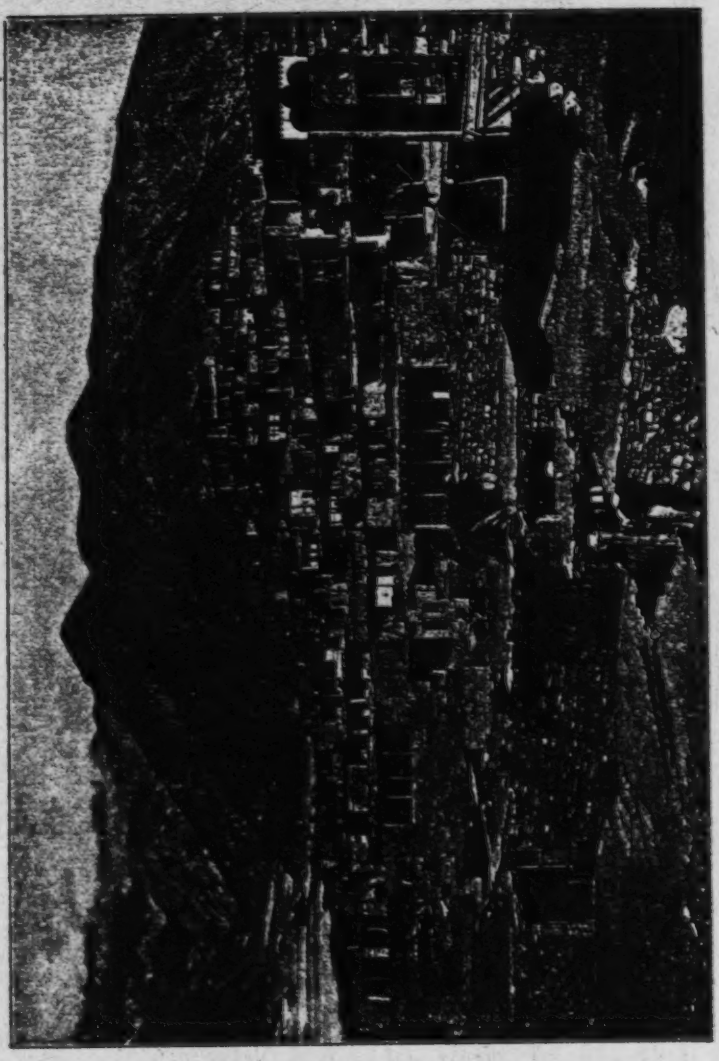
There are practically no handworkers among the Chechen, but on the other hand, they are as well represented and indigenous in Dagestan as in Georgia as a result of Persian and Tatar influence. They migrate from time to time from the unproductive regions to Caucasian and Russian cities in order to work there; from the Andi district, masons, stonemasons, carpenters, and locksmiths; from the Kazikumuk region, where there is no fruit or grapes and almost no arable land, silversmiths and coppersmiths, armorers, and tinkers. [Pl. 28 and 29 appear here.]

[See Category 116, p. 69 -- Analyst]

2: Byhan--46 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz
Dagestan RH 8

[784]

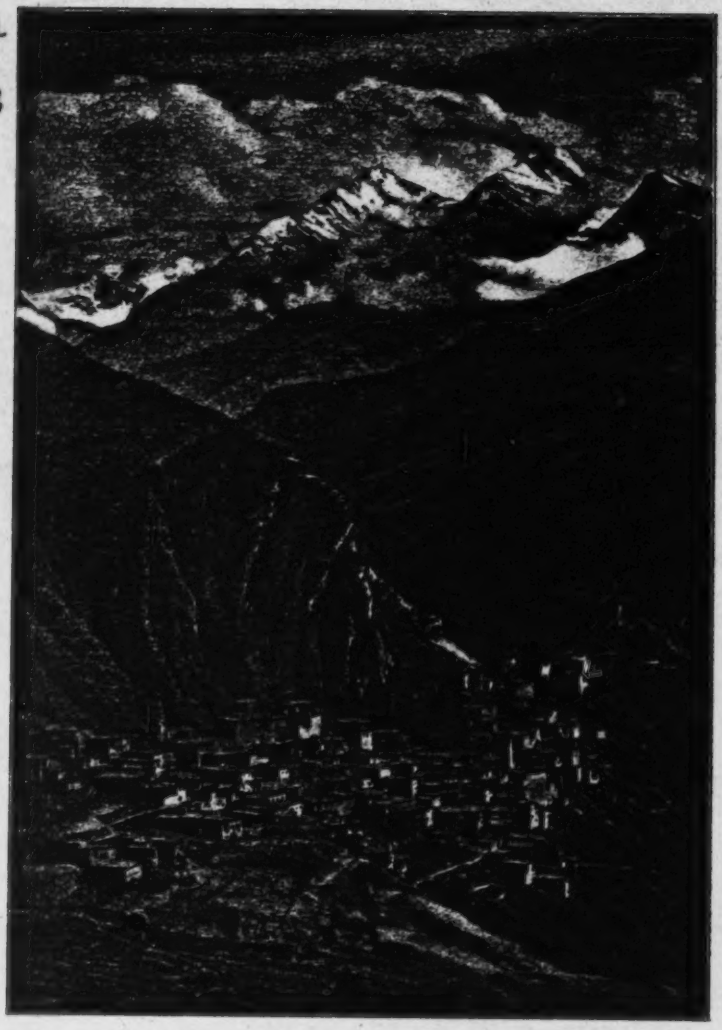
133
342
361



Pl. 28. Ikhrek, Rutul village in the valley of the Kara-Samur. (From M. v. Déchy.)

2: Byha n--47 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz
Dagestan RH 8

342
361
133



Pl. 29. Tindi on the Kilia-Bakh, an eastern tributary of the Andi Koisu. (From M. v. Déchy.)

463 [785] As small industries, millstones and gravestones (see Fig. 492) are produced in the Kurin district; among the Dargwa, sieves, sacks, ropes, and hemp materials; in a few Dargwa and Kurin villages, pottery (Fig. 467, No. 4, and Fig. 470); and in the north Avar district of Gunib, carpentry, cabinet-making, and the production of saddle-stands [Sattelgestellen]. In several places among the Dargwa, Avar, Andi, and Kurin, the carving of spoons, spoon-stands, and containers for flour, salt, and other things (Fig. 467, Nos. 5 and 6) is an occupation. [Fig. 464 appears here.] Musical instruments are made in the Kaitakh (Dargwa) [531] region, and wooden implements with inlaid brass and nickel wire in north Avaria. Tanning, shoemaking, and the furrier's trade are found in the Avar district of Gunib, among the Dargwa, Lak, and Kurin. Coppersmiths (Fig. 467, Nos. 1-3) and tinsmiths are found mainly among the Lak and sporadically in the Gunib and Andi districts; blacksmiths among the Dargwa, in the Gunib district, among the Lak, and among the eastern Kurin.

326 Goldsmiths and silversmiths are found in many places, but the major center for this industry is the district of Kaitago-Tabassaran. Here they make belts, belt-buckles, rings, cigarette-holders, cane-handles, mountings for daggers, sabers, and [321] pistols, ornaments, inlaid work in horn, ivory, mother-of-pearl, [439] and steel, enamel work, and so forth, which are also exported to Russia. The armorers of Kubachi (Tatar, Kubadżi; Arabic, Sarakh-Karan = armorer; native name, Augwugan, Ūgbuk, from the Armenian name of the old Albanians, Aγovan), who are mentioned as early as the sixteenth century A.D., formerly enjoyed great esteem, and even today, blades and rifles are still produced there and in some other villages of the Dargwa, Lak, and Avar, but since the end of the internal feuds and the battles against the Russians, [786] [Fig. 465 appears here] this industry has fallen off considerably. Blades (see Figs. 449, 451) 1 A [439] used to be exported in great number to Russia, and Lezgin gun-barrels were supposed to have been better than the Russian ones, although old iron was used for both, and old horseshoes were prefetred for dagger-blades. [Fig. 466 appears here.]

1 A [See category 116, pp. 11 & 14 -- analyst]

2: Byhan--49 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz
Dagestan RHI

291
531

Fig. 464. Knitted boot of bright, predominately white, black, and cherry-red wool, village of Beshita of the Kapuchi on the Khwan-or, western tributary of the Avar Koisu (1/4 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.)

2: Byhan--50 E-4 (no date) 1926

RI3 Abkhaz
Dagestan RH 8

[786]

342

Fig. 465. Avar House Zakataly District. (Photo A. Dirr.)

352
531

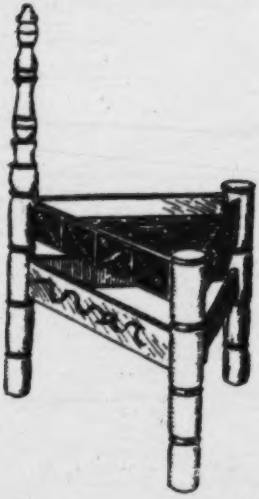


Fig. 466. Lezgin Stool (1/17 natural size). (From Count J. Zichy.)

[786 cont.]

D 336 The discovery of several old European blades from Hungary, Solingen, etc., which the master-crafts men formerly obtained from somewhere, since weapons, as is well known, have traveled, have been carried from place to place, and have been worked over throughout the Orient from Indonesia to Morocco, probably gave rise to the legend that the first armorers came here from Europe (Frangistan) via Turkey, although the whole style of D 172 work and the type of decoration indicate a Persian-Tatar origin, 174 and the ruins of old buildings and objects adorned with sculptured work, which have been found there or preserved there as old heirlooms, also speak for such an origin.

S D 133 Trade. The transportation of goods in this eastern part of the Caucasus is very difficult because of the fissuring and rugged- 487 ness of the valley walls. Most of the places in the high mountains can be reached [787] [Fig. 467 appears here] only on narrow mule-tracks, which often, when the river leaves no room, lead high up along steep rock walls, as in Albania; where the rock wall falls off vertically, pegs are pounded in and underbrush and stones laid on top.

S D 491 Besides isolated, old Persian-Tatar stone bridges in east Dagestan, two kinds of wooden bridge occur: narrow bridges of two or three planks, horizontal in the middle and steeply sloping on either side, with or without railings of thin poles, and usable only by horsemen or pedestrians; and bridges whose supporting piles on the bank are beams piled up crosswise, and [788] [Fig. 468 appears here] whose pathway consists of flooring-beams shoved out one over the other a little bit at a time from both sides until the middle of the stream is almost reached, and the remaining space can be closed up by a single layer.

S D 493 [789] [Fig. 469 appears here.] Wagons and men are trans- [493] ported on the mule-tracks by horse; in the lowlands, two-wheeled wagons (see Figs. 418 [in untranslated portion], 504) drawn by oxen and buffalo travel on the passable roads and are equipped with lattice-work sides and a sun-shade; the driver stands on the thill-piece. Because of the scarcity of bridges, the wheels are

[Text continues TOP of P. 55--Analyst]

2: Byhan--52 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz
[787]
Chechen RI 5
Dagestan RH 8
C
D
415

Fig. 467. 1 to 3, copper water-jugs; 4, clay jug; 5, water-jug wrought from a single piece, with burned decorations; 6, wooden cup for sour milk; 7, cauldron with three feet; 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, Lezgin; 3, Kazikumuk; 6, Chechen (1, 3, 1/9 nat. size; 4, 1/6 nat. size; 2, 5 to 7, 1/7 nat. size). (1, 3, 5, 6, Museum für Völkerkunde Berlin; 2, Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg; 4 and 7, from Count J. Zichy.)

2: Byhan--53 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz
Dagestan RH 8
Caucasia RH 1

[788]

C
D
283
286
294
493
912

Fig. 468. Implements of Caucasian industry: 1, spinning wheel; 2, ribbon loom; 3, knitting board for stockings; 4, wooden sword for flax-scutching; 5, hemp-ripple of wood with iron teeth; 6, wooden spindle; 7, yarn-spool; 8, ax; 9, cloth-cutter; 10, pitchfork; 11, mattock; 12, sickle; 13, pruning-bill for chopping off twigs; 14, brush-cutter; 15, iron spade with forked handle; 16, wagon frame; 17, plow with iron share and yoke; 18, threshing board, underside set with stone splinters; 1 to 3, Lezgin; 8, Zakataly Avar (2, 1/5 nat. size; 3, 1/3 nat. size; 4, 1/18 nat. size; 6, 7, and 12, 1/6 nat. size). (From Count J. Zichy.)

[789 cont.]

291

Fig. 469. Man's boots of felt, Kazikumuk (1/10 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin.)

354
531

Fig. 470. Lamp of reddish clay with white stripes, Kazikumuk (1/4 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin.)

C D 493 [789 cont.]
very high and have many spokes; the fellies consist of several pieces (in Russia of one) and are usually wide.

C D 525 560 Society and family. There are no differences of rank among either the Chechen or the Lezgin. They formerly had war-prisoners as slaves, who could become citizens, however, by marriage or emancipation. The Chechen people (nakhtše) are divided into C 619 621 tribes of societies (taipa), and these into villages (a'ûl) whose inhabitants carry the same family-name, therefore are from one C 623 594 kin-group [Sippe]. The elders make the decisions in the community and the family [Familie], but they are guided by tradition (adat) and religious law (šariat). They are treated with respect by all, and similarly in the family on the part of the C 762 children toward the father, whose anger may even drive a son to suicide. [Fig. 470 appears here.]

C D 583 584 [178] Marriage, too, is concluded according to the prescriptions of the law, but few of the old customs concerning it have been preserved. Usually a man takes only one wife and pays a small purchase-price after his suit has been accepted by the girl and her father. Among the Avar every girl has the right to take a man of her choice; she goes to his house, and he must then marry her. Among the Andi the abduction of girls does occur, but only rarely now.

D 585 [790] Among the Dido a peculiar custom survives: two friends of the groom go to the bride's house, throw a sheepskin over her head, and pull her out into the street on it, where she is pelted with dirt by the people as far as the groom's house. A marriage custom among the Andi of Tindi is more easily understood: the bride, accompanied by women and armed men carrying torches on long poles, rides toward the groom, who comes with a similar retinue. A mock battle starts where the two companies meet; they try to take prisoners and [Fig. 471 appears here] shoot out one another's torches. During this the bride is given over by her friends to the women relatives of the groom, who lead her to the groom's house; the latter comes soon afterwards with two friends as guards (compare p. 17) and must fight a furious battle with the one he has married.

Chechen RI5
Dagestan RH8

D [790 cont.]

582 584 595 [851]

The Dido are said to have formerly married blood-relatives and to have had the same custom as the Great Russians, which still exists among the Kurin of Kurush: the father married his under-aged son to an adult girl, with whom he himself then lived; the children then fell half to the father and half to the son after he had come of age. In former times among the Ingush, after

C 587 595

D [301] [531]

Fig. 471. Silver breast-ornament with filigree work, Lezgin (1/4 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin.)

the father's death the eldest son used to take over the wives of the former, except his own mother.

C D 562 583 428 586

The woman does not wear any veil, is well treated, and enjoys complete freedom in her own realm; she has control over her dowry and can inherit and bequeath. Divorce is very easy; the man tells her to leave, or the woman flees to her parents. The Avar women are very excitable and allow themselves to be so carried away as to murder an unfaithful husband, and, on the other hand, a man will kill a guilty wife with his dagger. Abduction is expiated with blood (cf. p. 717 [untranslated]), though the man often consents to peaceful settlement.

D 837

[790 cont.]

D
301
531

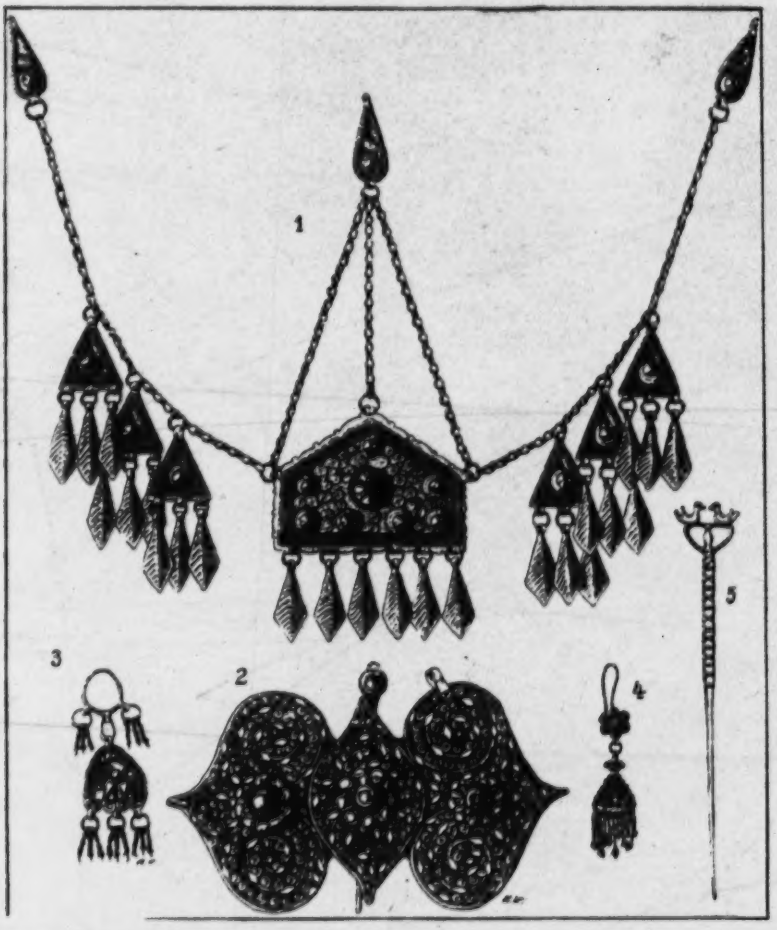


Fig. 472. Lezgin silver ornaments: 1, breast pendants from Botlikh; 2, belt-buckle; 3 and 4, ear pendants; 5, hairpin (1/3 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.)

D
862
C
551

The children are often suckled a long time, until the fifth and sixth year. The first names of the Chechen have not yet been supplanted by Moslem names, and masculine ones are mostly derived from the animal world, such as Wolf (bors), Bear (cheburs), Hare (pagal), Eagle (ersu), Falcon (leg), Dove (khoksi), Dog (poe), Pig (khaka); feminine names are Flower (dziezok), Angel (maleika), [791] [Fig. 472 appears here] Calf-rider (azir-vakhara), Rider on a Female Dog (osiali-vakhara).

[791 cont.]

C 764 D 069 Death. Burials are now conducted according to Moslem custom. The Chechen used to put three pieces of bread and spirits to drink into the grave with the deceased, who was buried fully dressed and armed; his horse was taken to the grave for exactly the same procedure as among the Cherkess (see p. 22), C 765 [792] and the women mourned there a week. The day after the interment the "funeral memorial ceremony" took place, at which all the relatives and friends were entertained; the food eaten by them, according to their belief, was for the benefit of the deceased. Later the "bed memorial ceremony" was held, after C 775 526 which the departed could leave his bed in the next world; [Fig. 473 appears here] it was accompanied by shooting-matches and races, and four of the horses were dedicated to him and to his ancestors. After two years the "great memorial ceremony" was C 587 held, and after the fourth year the widow could lay aside her mourning and marry again. She was still considered the property of the deceased, and his people claimed her body after her death in order to bury her next to his grave. No memorial ceremonies were customary for women and girls. C 765

C D 764 078 Gravestones (cf. Fig. 492) are erected on the graves, which are lined with stone slabs and boards. Graves of fighters for the creed are sacred and are marked by a wooden lance planted upright nearby and bearing a white or red pennon (cf. Vol. II, 1, Fig. 244); usually a little house or domed structure rises over them. The Ingush and Lak customarily pile up stones in the form of a box on the graves in the ancient manner and place a stone as tall as a man on top. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the dead were buried in conical or hut-shaped grave-structures (kaša) with a floor-area of 4X4 meters and a height of 8-10 meters, with two or three rows of peepholes; the body was laid inside on the stone wall-benches and food and all sorts of implements were put in with it (cf. pp. 738 f. [untranslated] and Fig. 494). Besides these kin-group mausoleums, one also finds in many places in Chechnya some [793] with a vestibule and domed roof, which seem to be of the above-mentioned western Osset type, and, in the mountains, subterranean ones, which may be earlier in origin.

RI3 Abkhaz
Chechen RI 5
Dagestan RII 8

[793 cont.]

Religion. Islam had already secured a firm hold in Dagestan by the end of the eighth century, but in Chechnya, where Christianity was supposed to have been introduced from Georgia in the fourth century, [Fig. 474 appears here] although Islam also penetrated there, it soon disappeared.

Fig. 473. Helmet, Chechen.
(Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin.)

It was not until the eighteenth century that the Chechen took it up again from the Kymyk and Kabardin, and in the nineteenth century, together with the neighboring Lezgin, they were zealous allies of the religious champions Kazi-Mullah and Shamyl against the Russians (up to 1859).

Two dervish orders (tarikat, cf. Vol. II, 1, p. 394) have found adherents among them, the Nakshubendi and the Kunta sects, founded in the sixties by the Mullah Kunta-Khaji. They wear the prayer-cord, the rosary, around their necks, embrace one another, pray aloud (šikra), form a chain at their services, [794] clap their hands, repeat constantly, faster and faster, "la illakhä il allakh" (= there is no god but Allah), and whirl in circles like the Mehlevi, until they fall unconscious.

[794 cont.]

in circles like the Mehlevi, until they fall unconscious.

The mosques (mă'ăbed) in Dagestan resemble the Persian ones. In Chechnya they are not distinguished from ordinary houses and have no minarets; the priest (budun = crier) calls the people to prayer from the roof or in front of the mosque.

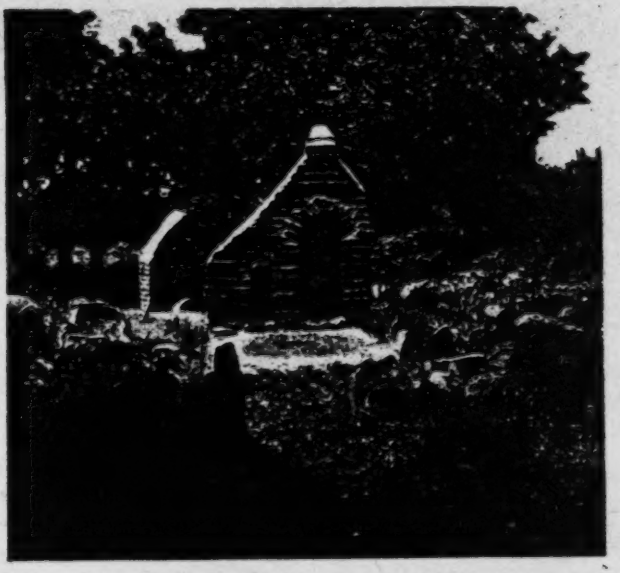


Fig. 474. Avar Grave-houses, Zakataly District.
(Photo. A. Dirr.)

The Lezgin and Chechen observe the outward prescriptions of Islam faithfully; they wash and bathe themselves five times daily, give alms, and make pilgrimages to Mecca in order to return as "khaji [hadji]. The Avar, in the absence of a mosque, give the prayers on stone structures (of 2 × 3 by one meter in height) near a spring or a river. They make pilgrimages to the graves of holy men (pir-kend); for example, Kurin and Uden women go to the grave of Suleiman in Liga, probably to plead for a blessing of children.

Only a few are Christians, such as the Uden, of whom those living in Nish are Armenian-Gregorian, and those in Vartashen are orthodox. Remains of old churches are not found in Dagestan, but are found in fairly large numbers in Chechnya. The best preserved

[794 cont.]
is the Tkhaba-erda (= the saint of the 2000) near Pui in the Assa valley, which is about 15 meters long and decorated with a columned vestibule and sculptured work that are not Georgian in type. A hundred years ago the Ingush still made pilgrimages there every year and sacrificed animals, which an old priest (tsain zag) slaughtered; the brains and bones were brought into the church after the feast. In June they traveled to a high cave in the Assa valley near the village Vapila, in which there was an iron cross; on Pentecost and on New Year's Day, which falls three days earlier than the Christian day, they went up into the mountains in order to make offerings of rifles, bullets, and candles to St. Galaerd in an old church in the Mechal district. Also in the country of the Kist there are sacred places consecrated to St. George and Holy Mary (cf. p. 744 [untranslated]). The Chechen week is also of Christian origin, beginning with Sunday (khkyrude, from Greek kyrios = lord); the other days are designated as first day, second day, etc., and Saturday is called ša'at (= Sabbath).

Among the Lezgin there seem to be scarcely any remains of their pre-Islamic religion, and among the Chechen, too, [795] the traditions about the gods and their cult are dying out with the older people. They always directed their prayers and offerings, even when they were intended for other gods and spirits, to the creator of the world, the father of the gods (Dele, Dala). An important role was played by: the god of thunder (Seli), whose daughter (Seli Sata) was the protectress of virgins; the sun-goddess (Dela Molkh), with her mother, Aza, toward whose place of rising the people faced while praying and toward which the praying-places were turned, while the moon and the stars were given less attention; the "mother of the storms" (Dardsa-nărilk) enthroned on the Kazbek, whose seven sons (Dardsa-kuangish) flew to heaven, where they are still to be seen (the Big Dipper); and the one-eyed lord of the forests and the wild animals (Elta), whom the Lezgin still know under the Arabic name Abdal (= servant of God). Other nature-divinities

[795 cont.]

were: the "mother of the waters" (Khi-nana); the protector of the grain and of the beer and spirits produced from it (Meler-erda); and the war-god (Molzy-erda). The nature of several other gods who enjoyed general veneration, to whom holy places (elgyts) or old churches were consecrated and sacrifices of animals, bread, beer, spirits, candles, gold, and valuable objects were offered, such as Tushol, who is worshiped especially by women, Misr, Amgali-erda on the mountain Artz-Khoi, Tamysh-erda on the "Red Mountain" (Ingush: budur lam) near the village Khuli, and Mätseli on the Mätty, is no longer clear. Certain details indicate that they were dispensers of fertility, but worship of them was clearly mixed up with the ancestor cult and remained fixed also on the churches that had been erected in place of heathen prayer-grounds at the time of the greatest expansion of the Georgian Empire and of Christianity in Chechnya.

Ancestor worship remained alive to the last, and each kin group [Sippe], with the villages, districts, and tribes that had grown out of it, had its own special protective spirits (erda; Ingush, tsu). The Chechen believed that the actual soul of a person, his "nature" (taram), lived on after his death in the same way as before, while the vital energy died with the body; the former wandered to the west under the earth to the next world (Deli-Ailli), where it joined the souls of relatives who had died previously, its kin group. They also believed in marriage in the next world, in which case the father of a [796] departed youth never refused the offer of the father of a deceased girl, although he had to pay a high bride-price (cf. p. 81).

The Chechen took the concepts of hell (dʒodʒakheth), paradise (ageret), and a reward for good and evil deeds accomplished in this world (deli-makhli) from Christianity and Islam. For each soul there is in heaven a wooden skeleton that starts to sway and cover itself with flesh as soon as the body dies and the soul ascends to heaven on a ladder; there it animates the body assigned to it, which is beautiful or ugly according to its behavior on earth. Similarly, the concepts of good and evil spirits, favorably or unfavorably disposed toward men, and of

[796 cont.]

devils (šaitan) were taken over from Islam, while the wicked wood-demons and witches (almas), as elsewhere (see above p. 714 [untranslated]), are of indigenous origin.

The souls of ancestors were also the protective spirits (Seli) of the domestic hearth, and Wednesday (Ker-Seli) was consecrated to them. The hearth with the cauldron, hook, chain, fire, and ashes was considered sacred; the bride took ceremonial leave of it when departing from her parents' house, and the murderer obtained the protection of the father of the house, as among the Albanians, as soon as he touched the cauldron-chain, even when it was the house of an enemy kin-group. The oath on the ancestors' souls was considered the most solemn one, and when boundary-stones were set or land was divided, their vengeance was invoked on anyone who might disturb the arrangements. The wronged person threatened to slaughter a dog on the grave of the ancestors of the tardy debtor or if he did not make amends or clear himself with an oath.

Holy places (elgyts), small huts like the burial-houses (kaša) with one or two doors on the east or north side, in which horns and antlers and white symbols (ryts) are put as offerings, served for the worship of the gods and ancestors (cf. above, p. 741 [untranslated]). In the Khamkhin district offerings were also made near cemeteries at rectangular stone pillars with a niche carved out on the east side, in which the worshiper laid his head next to a burning candle. The kin group, village, or a larger community worshiped once a year at the sacred place and brought offerings of sheep, beer, spirits, a special ceremonial dish (tegum), [797] and breads, of which one had to be triangular, which were then eaten in company.

The sacrificial priests (tsain-zag) were chosen among the Ingush for life, or they belonged to a special kin-group according to tradition. They also engaged in the interpretation of dreams and predicting the future, and when someone had angered a deity, they determined by casting lots -- three sticks from a spoon -- the sacrifice that was to be offered (cf. Fig. 561 [in untranslated portion]). There were also soothsayers (dzyryk), who laid themselves on the floor in the holy place during the

[797 cont.]
night with one ear on the ground and in this way awaited a message from the deity. Female soothsayers used to use rams' bones, mirrors, stones, and the like for their purposes. [Fig. 475 appears here.]

As a magical means of warding off evil, the Kurin sew amulets into their clothing on the back, and the Andi try to conjure up rain in the same way as the Balkan peoples (cf. also p. 27): a girl completely covered with leaves and twigs is led through the village by the others who beg for rain in song, and then all of them bathe in the river and sacrifice a sheep. The evil spirit that causes pains in the head is drawn out by making a

Fig. 475. A brass snake that is supposed to protect valuable articles buried under it from theft and deterioration, Kazikumuk (1/2 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin.)

hole in the sick man's skull with a knife (trepanation). For someone struck by lightning an animal is slaughtered as an offering to the one who caused the death, the thunder-god -- as among the Osset (see p. 87), the Abkhaz, and Cherkess (see pp. 25 f.) -- usually a cow, and the hide and head were hung on a pole.

Little is known of the legal practices, which are older than the lay and religious precepts (adat and šariat). Blood vengeance is still practiced among the Avar.

Among the Ingush, as mentioned above, the dog played a similar rôle a hundred years ago, as is the case among the Osset (see p. 95) and among the Khevsur (see p. 747 [untranslated]), when a man wished to press a claim on another. A debtor or a person accused of theft had to swear on the sacred rock (yerda), to which dog bones and manure had been brought, and thereby acknowledge that if he denied the truth his ancestors would have to carry the ancestors of the accuser on their shoulders.

[See category 116, P. 63 -- Analyst]

[798] [Fig. 476 appears here.]

D 534

Fig. 476. Bagpipe, lute, pipe, Lezgin. (From M. v. Dechy.)

D 212 191 Islam is responsible for reading and writing being widely known. Boys and girls learn to read the Koran and, above all, to write in Tatar, for this is the universal language of trade in eastern Dagestan, while in the west it is Avar.

C 534 535 Music and dance. Among the Ingush, the men used to dance by themselves, singly or in rows or circles, to the accompaniment of shawms, bagpipes, or pipes, and similarly the women danced by themselves while a blind musician played for them. D 535 [191] The Lezgin dance, which has been taken over by all the Caucasian peoples, symbolizes a man's wooing a shy, elusive woman; the dancers move the head and arms meaningfully, hold the body as straight as possible, and take small and very rapid sideward steps with the feet. Weapon-dances are also customary: one man dances between daggers stuck in the ground, or he holds them in his hands and displays his skill in manipulating them. C D 534 The musical accompaniment for dancing is provided by a drum and a clarinet; for singing, by the lute (Avar, t'ara) or the fiddle (Chechen, tsuandurki), each with two or three strings.

[799] 4. Indo-Germanic Peoples

a) The Osset

101 The Osset, called Ossili by Ptolemy in the second century A.D., were called Ass or Alan by the Arabic and medieval authors, and Yossi by the Russian chronicler Nestor (about 1100).

131 698 In the first few centuries A.D., they occupied the territory between the Don and the Sea of Azov, which probably got its name from them, and they formed one part of the Alan, who in large part had been swept away to the west by the Goths and Huns at the beginning of the tribal migrations (perhaps the name of the Moldavian capital city, Jassy, pronounced Yaš, comes from them). They appear to have been forced south to the Terek and Kuban by the Khazar in the ninth and tenth centuries and by the Mongols in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and finally into their present site by the Kabardin penetrating in from the Crimea in the fourteenth century. Originally they, or the Alan, were a [104] powerful equestrian people who provided mercenary troops for the Georgians, Persians, Byzantines, and Khazar, but through internal dissension and battles with the Georgians and later with the Kabardin, they were reduced sharply in number and were depressed economically and culturally, to which the ruggedness and infertility of their present territory contributed. [Fig. 477 appears here.]

[800] [Fig. 478 appears here.]

181 The influence of environment and neighbors shows itself in their intellectual qualities: the Digor and the Tagaur are depicted as uncommunicative, honest, and industrious, the Kurtalin as candid, while the Alagir are said to be good-natured and clumsy.

142 Physically the Osset are of medium height and thick-set. The skull is medium-long to short, usually flat to medium-high; the face is broad, the nose large and straight, the chin short and round, and the lips thin. The complexion is light -- children often have red cheeks -- the eyes usually blue or gray, more rarely brown, and the hair blond, reddish, or light brown in

[800 cont.]

most cases. Blondness and blue eyes appear to be more common in the south than in the more level north, where mixture with dark-skinned peoples (Lezgin, Kabardin, etc.) has probably taken place. Because of this lightness of hair and eyes, as well as many similarities in language and in material and spiritual traits (see below), various investigators have assumed a relationship with the Germanic peoples; on closer examination, however, it can only be conjectured that blond elements that predominated among the northern Indo-Germanic peoples migrated down from the north, mixed with this division of the Iranians, and remained in the majority; it is questionable whether Germanic constituents, say from the Goths and others who did press forward near them, are involved. The cultural phenomena that lead to the same assumption are also found among their neighbors, others may be assumed to be an old Indo-Germanic heritage, whereas others, especially religious customs and beliefs, point to strong influence on the part of the old indigenous population or mixture with it (see below, p. 83 ff.).

142 [144] 174

142 302 291 411

Fig. 477. Tagaur Osset from Chmi. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

[800 cont.]

291 The clothing of the men (Figs. 477 and 480) does not differ essentially from that customary in the Caucasus; it consists of a

Fig. 478. Felt boot with leather trimming, Osset (1/6 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.)

cotton shirt, a dark undergarment of cotton or wool (kurat), over it a gray or black cherkeska (tsok'a) of coarse cloth with cartridge-pockets on the breast, leather belt (rona), narrow or full trousers (šarovari, šalbar), and in addition, for bad weather, a hooded coat (nimat). In summer they wear white, broad-rimmed felt hats (khud, khode) on [303] their heads, shaved bald, and, in winter, goat-skin caps (papakh) and [Fig. 479 appears here] [801] almost always a coarse woolen cloth (baslak) over them. On their legs they wear thick woolen stockings (mestalt'ă), leather leggings (zengoit'ă), and light sandals (dzăbyrt'ă) of soft leather or [Fig. 480 appears here] felt cloth, and in addition, in the street, overshoes with thick soles of cord or straps, or, for mountain climbing, shoes of hide (artš'it'ă) with plaited-cord soles and an inner layer of grass (Figs. 478 and 479). Like other Caucasians, they carry a dagger (kata) on the belt, and formerly a saber (akhsagard) and pistol (dambatsa) as well -- now a revolver (kerrakh) and a gun (top').

[802] The women's costume (see Fig. 481) is usually red or blue. It consists of full cotton trousers (šarovari), white shirt,

Fig. 479. Leather climbing-shoe, Osset (1/6 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.)

2: Byhan--69 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz
OSSET RH9

192
291
302
915
982

Fig. 480. Osset and wife, carrying a flour container. (From Count J. Zichy.)

[802 cont.]

long undergarment (karnador-khadona) with wide sleeves, which is decorated with silver or gold edging (bit) and with silver clasps at the neck, a breast-bib similarly provided with edging and silver ornaments, or an open vest, and a short coat with narrow sleeves, over which a silver-mounted belt is worn. [Fig. 481 appears here.] Like the men they wear woolen stockings and sandals on their feet and overshoes in the street. The girls cover their heads with a

Fig. 481. Osset Woman. (From R. v. Erckert.)

Kabardin cap (see p. 5); the women, according to a strict precept of tradition, cover theirs with a cloth (narban, fata) after the first birth, and it is a grave insult and offense against them if a man tears it off.

Settlement and dwelling. The villages in the lowlands are in part somewhat spread out, partway up the mountains they contain twenty to thirty farmsteads, and farther up five or six, laid out on the slopes in terraces, and in the high mountains the citadel-like farmsteads are scattered individually.

The houses along the northern boundary of Ossetia are built of mud and lattice-work in the style of the Cherkess and Cossack

[802 cont.]
houses, while in the southern lowlands wood is used as a building material, and in the mountains, stones.

The houses in the south (see Fig. 482) are made of beams with one or two stories and are covered with bark or boards. Besides the farm buildings in the yard, which is surrounded by a board fence, there are smaller huts on poles, with a flat roof, for the married children. The houses in the highlands resemble the Khevsur houses in construction and layout [803] (see p. 725

Fig. 482. Tuali dwelling, Osset. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

[untranslated]); they lean against mountain slopes and, like the Georgian huts, are partly built into the slope. The yard (kand) has a high wall built around it, on whose corners small turrets are often placed, and within, besides manure piles, plows (sibirr), sledges, drays, carts (uardun), and other agricultural implements, there are granaries (gondon) and, in the south, smaller huts, one of which is for guests in case there is no third floor with a guest-room. [Fig. 482 appears here.] In the village, or in many places, as well as in each farmstead, there is a high defense tower (see Fig. 484) like the Khevsur towers.

[803 cont.]

The larger room, on the upper floor in the two-story houses, serves as kitchen and living-room. In the middle there is a stone slab set into the floor for the hearth, and over it hangs the iron or copper cauldron (arrsist) by an iron chain (rakhis) from a crossbeam (valardigatta); the smoke passes through a tube of plaited twigs smeared with mud and cow-dung, or through a stone chimney that extends just beyond or ends just below the flat roof covered with mud or stones and open on two sides. Along two walls stand low benches (bandon) with curved pieces of wood instead of feet; usually only the men sit on them, while the women generally squat on the floor. The eldest member of the kin group, however, [804] uses either a special, three-legged stool with a richly carved back (kalatkin), a chair with back and arm-rests (darsbandon), a four-legged chair with crossbars instead of arm-rests, or simple three-legged stools (see Fig. 430 [in untranslated portion]). Other furnishings are: three-legged, round tables (kakhkin), tongs (artsiskan), fire-shovels (aslan), roasting-spits with four long points, baking-trough (aring), butter-tub, and the like; on wall-shelves near the hearth all kinds of brightly polished vessels of wood, copper, clay, and glass are set out, and on the walls hang clothing, weapons, etc.

In the second room (khossan) stand the cradle and, as beds -- in contrast to other oriental countries -- rectangular, carved boxes with feet and high poles at the four corners tied together by a crosspole, which are padded with rugs and bedding. A door leads from the living-room into a storage-room (kabits) where the household spirit (safa) lives.

Economy. In the lowlands the Osset prefer to practice agriculture. Here a three-field system predominates: in the first year the freshly fertilized field is seeded with wheat or maize, in the second with barley, and in the third it lies fallow. They also cultivate some rye, oats, and millet (galma), and in the house gardens (sagaradon), peas, beans, cucumbers, onions, leeks, and potatoes. Grain is cut with a sickle, grass with a scythe. In the mountains, the arable land (khugent), which is measured in quarter-hectares (bongen = a day's work,

[804 cont.]

cf. the German Morgen) is very narrow on the slopes and is constantly threatened by heavy downpours and falling rocks; here rye and barley are the principal crops. For this reason* animal husbandry predominates; sheep in particular are kept, and to a lesser extent goats, horses, and cattle, although the cow still always serves as a measure of value. In summer the animals spend the night in a barnyard surrounded by a stone wall or plashed hedge near the house -- in winter in the house-stable -- where cows, goats, and sheep are milked and where the manure is carefully collected to be used as fertilizer and to be made into fuel-bricks (see p. 730 [untranslated]).

Hunting no longer provides any appreciable contribution to subsistence, and fishing just as little; for the latter, in addition to fishing rods (simple wire hook on a short line of white horsehair and a long rod), they use nets and weir-baskets.

The men perform the heavy work, such as plowing, threshing, carpentry, and bricklaying; furthermore, they make wooden implements, fur caps, shoes, saddles, bridles, etc. There are only blacksmiths and locksmiths as artisans, and pottery seems to be absent; [805] [Figs. 483 and 484 appear here] [806] in forested regions, the men float and sell timber as a supplementary occupation. The women take care of the household and the animals; they spin (see Fig. 488, 1), weave, make silver and gold edging, cords, and men's hats of thin, white felt, fetch firewood from the forest, flour from the mill, etc. (see Fig. 480).

The food of the Osset consists principally of barley [Fig. 485 appears here] and rye flat-cakes of bread (tšurek), milk, cheese, bean and maize soup (basu), various herbs, onions and garlic in salt-water (zakhdon), radishes, and red pepper. Meat is usually eaten only on holidays, mainly mutton, boiled or cut in pieces and roasted on a spit (šašlik). Other foods for holidays or entertaining guests are: mutton soup, bread of maize or wheat flour that is brought up from the lowlands, cheese toasted in butter (dzika), and round cakes filled with cheese (khabišin, aKhTSin).

*[i.e., the arable land is very narrow -- analyst]

2: Byhan--74 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz
OSSET RH9
[805]
133
361
342
712

Fig. 483. Kamunta, Digori village on the Aigamugi-don, tributary of the upper Urukh. (From M. v. Déchy.)

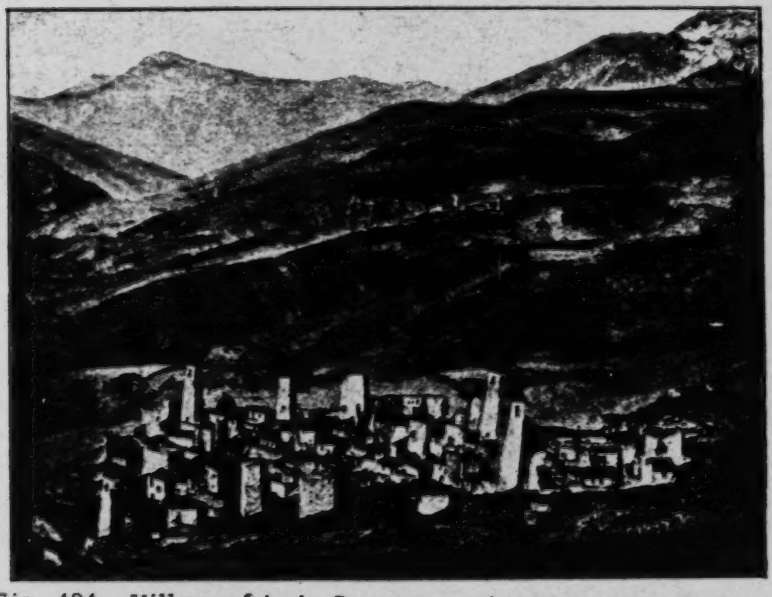


Fig. 484. Village of Arsi, Osset mountain country. (From G. Nioradze.)

[806 cont.]

akhtsin). With this they drink barley liquor (araki), mead (rung), sweet, black beer (ludi), and dry, light beer (bagan) made of barley and hops, as well as two other beer-like drinks, probably taken over from the Tatars: [807] one made from millet or rye groats (braga), and the other (buza) from bread, wheat, and malt. The barley beer brewed by the women is drunk in great quantities on holidays, as among the Khevsur. [Fig. 486 appears here.]

During the day some bread, cheese, and the like is eaten as required. The main meal is eaten in the evening, first by the

Fig. 485. Tagauri women with household implements. (From G. Nioradze.)

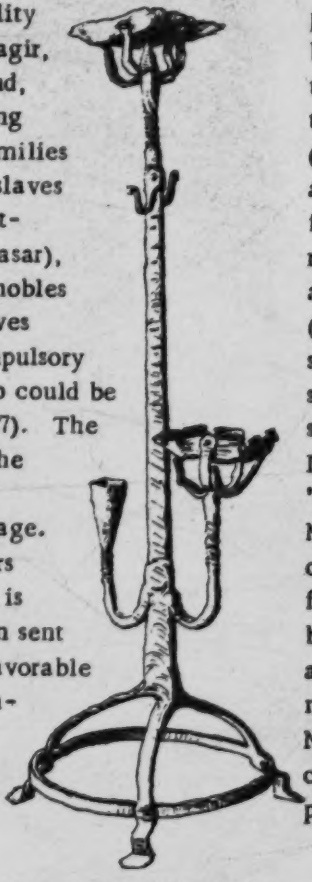
elders, then by the younger people. Before the meal begins, prayers are said, and during the meal moderation and reserve are maintained; afterwards the hands are washed over a basin passed around by a servant. Departing from oriental custom, they use wooden bowls, plates, spoons, knives, forks, and napkins.

Social and family arrangements. The five major tribes of the Osset are divided into subtribes or stocks [Geschlechter], and further into village communities with an elder (khetsau) at

619 [807 cont.]
621 the head, and these in turn consist of kin groups [Sippen] or ex-
627 tended families [Grossfamilien] with a father of the house (aldâr)
596 as the head. The position of the women, who usually stay in
529 their own quarters in the house, and the ranking among them are governed in the same way as among the Georgians.

565 Social equality prevails among the
184 Kurtalin and Alagir, but among the Tagaur,
on the other hand, there used to be four
classes, as among the plains Georgians:
eleven noble families (aldar), who were per-
mitted to keep slaves and who owned all the
land; free tenant- farmers (farsaglag);
bondsmen (kavdasar), resulting from mar-
[595] riages between nobles and peasants' daughters
as secondary wives (nomuluos) and obli-
[567] gated to do compulsory service; and slaves
(gurdsuagi), who could be sold and also put to
death (until 1867). The same social order
existed among the Digor, where the nobles
were called "baduliat."

582 [808] Marriage. Men usually marry at
twenty-five years of age, girls at nine-
584 teen. Marriage is first proposed secretly
through a woman sent by the suitor's parents
and then, if a favorable answer is received,
openly by match- makers (minuwartar),
[583] who bring gifts. Next the engagement is
announced by a crier (ɣark'anak), the
groom pays the purchase price (arɣat)



359 Fig. 486. Iron stand with two lamps and a candle-socket, Osset along the Georgian highway (about 1/8 natural size).

584 of 100 to 120 rubles, [Fig. 487 appears here] in earlier days, animals and weapons, and a feast and drinking bout (kaes) are held by the bride's parents. From then until the wedding the bride remains hidden, even from the groom.

[808 cont.]

585 On the wedding day, when the groom arrives at the bride's house with his mounted, singing, and shooting retinue (kindzgonta), he lets himself be led, with his face covered by a cloth, to the oldest woman present, to whom he gives 20 to 30 rubles and a piece of cotton, for which he receives half a pail of sweet red wine, food, and delicacies, which are eaten by his escorts. In [583] the meantime, the dowry is brought to the groom's house, and the bride puts on her usual attire, except that her head is covered with a cloth, her face with a veil (khisa); then the best man

133
256

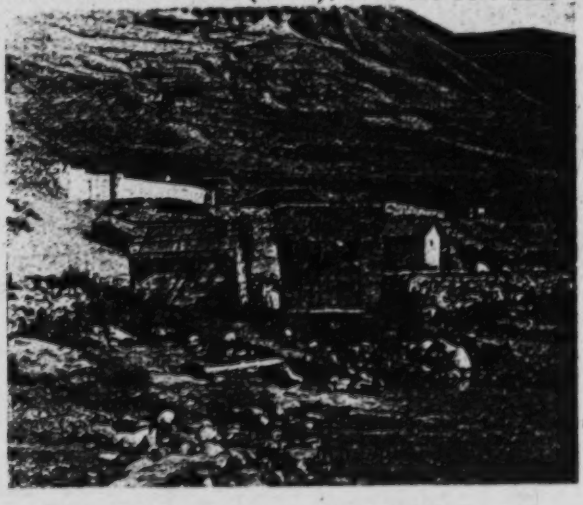


Fig. 487. Turbine mill in Dalagkan on the Fiagdon. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

585 (anshuargin) and the bridesmaid (džinarkinmade) lead her to the church, where the groom awaits her. After the wedding she is taken in a one-horse cart to her new home, where sweets are poured over her at the door as a sign of good wishes for a happy and fruitful marriage. On the return trip shots are fired to ward [589] off evil spirits, and for the same reason the bridal couple are veiled; furthermore, for the same reason, the young man's people hold daggers over the heads of the newlyweds when they enter the house, [809] and boys smash all kinds of things in the bedroom and throw them out. Then the young wife must bow down

[809 cont.] Then the young wife must bow down
before the hearth and cauldron-chain, ask for a blessing from the household spirit (olar-safa), and anoint the shoes of the mother of the house (ǯfsin) with fat as a sign of her future obedience. After this she is led to the sacred stone in front of the village, the seat of the Mother of God (made-meiram), the protectress of married women, to ask for her blessing, [Fig. 488 appears here] and finally, while the guests are seating themselves for

585
[776]
[806]
[778]

283
352
412
415
531

Fig. 488. 1, spindle of solid wood (alkhuf) (1/4 natural size); 2, top of a three-legged table (1/6 natural size); 3, child's spoon with incised decoration (ufdeg) (1/4 natural size); 4, carved wooden salt-cellar (2/5 natural size). (1 and 3, Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg; 2 and 4, Museum für deutsche Volkskunde, Berlin.)

[809 cont.]

142
302
291
534

Fig. 489. Osset bagpiper.

585 the feast, she is led into the bedroom, which she must not leave for three days and nights, and where she visits her husband only secretly at night. After this time has passed, the wife's mother brings the young man food and drinks and the gifts that his wife prepared for him as a bride, usually clothing and the like, blesses them both, and has the veil removed from the wife by a youth with a roasting-spit (khikhesan). The young couple now begin their married life together, [810] [Fig. 489 appears here] and
[302] the woman no longer wears just one braid, but three, one in the back and one on each side of the face (Fig. 480).

842 The birth of a boy is greeted with joy; the parents are congratulated, and the men lay rifle-bullets in the cradle with the
862 child, but the birth of a girl is considered a misfortune. Children are suckled until two, sometimes even until five years of age.
They are bathed once or twice a month and otherwise lie in the
854 cradle, in the bottom of which, as in Turkestan, a tube of wood or bone is installed, through which the urine is supposed to drain.
896 The new mother must remain in the house for two weeks after the delivery, and there is a celebration when she first goes out.

[810 cont.]

551 Besides a Christian or Mohammedan name, the child is given a native one which remains as its first name. Masculine names are, for example, Inaluk (= the new one), Sau-kuy (= black dog), Tsărai (= live!), Mairan, Kubadi; feminine ones are Sardan (= the merry one), Daubau, Tsada (= thistle), Kyeba, Surme.

763 Death. When a man dies, his death is announced in the village by a crier (ɣark'anak). The burial and mourning cus-
764 toms are similar to those of the Khevsur (see above, p. 737 f.
765 [untranslated]) with regard to the participation of the entire vil-
[197] lage, lament for the dead, women mourners, funeral feast, and horse-races. On the third day the deceased is wrapped in felt or cotton and borne on a board to the grave.

Here the male relatives beat their foreheads and the back of their necks, and the women pull their hair and scratch their faces with stones, which, covered with blood, they throw into the grave. The widow cuts off her braids and lays them on the dead man's breast as a sign that she will belong to him even in

[915] the next world. An old priest (bakh faldisakhu) with three [811] relatives goes around the body three times, ex-tols his virtues and deeds in a speech, and tells of the kingdom of the dead (barastyr) and the ride to it; then he strikes the dead man's horse, whose neck is covered with white calico and the rump with a morocco-leather blanket, with the widow's braids and gives it millet and spirits in a bowl, which is then smashed against its hoof. Then a notch is made in its ear, and a man gallops off on it. Calico and saddle-blankets are distributed to

Fig. 490. Coffins from burial-houses in Saniba, Ossetia. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

[811 cont.]

764 the poor. After the priest has finally offered spirits and bread as a sacrifice for the dead, the body is lowered into the grave.

765 After the interment the funeral feast takes place, and during the year up to twelve memorial feasts, to which all the people from the village concerned and also from neighboring villages are invited. The costs of these many celebrations are so great that many a kin group is reduced to poverty by them, but respect for the dead requires them, as does the wish that the [005] departed may have holy bread, black beer, and spirits in the next world instead of grass to eat. On the Friday of the sixth week after New Year's Day, in the "time of great fasting," during which the "gathering of the dead" takes place, a doll dressed in the clothing of the deceased is put on an elevation, and his relatives and friends offer spirits and [Fig. 490 appears here] gruel from the memorial feast to him and spend the night there in mourning. The widow must fast for a year, wear a rough, black shirt and dress, and perform the duties that she otherwise would do for her husband: make the bed, light a candle, hold a wash-basin, jug, and hand-towel, etc. Every [007] Friday evening she goes to the grave (as in the Balkans) to bring her husband food and drink.

766 If a bride dies, the female relatives lay out the body in the cemetery for the burial, and one of the women releases the groom from the engagement in her name and begs him to permit her to choose another groom in the next world.

766A [008] In olden times only the [812] bodies of women were buried; those of men were wrapped in ox or buffalo skins and hung on sacred trees. There are now six types of graves in Ossetia.

The more recent Moslem graves are marked with an upright stone one and a quarter to one and a half meters high and 60 to 70 centimeters wide, on the front face of which, as among the Serbs, horses and weapons are painted at the bottom [Fig. 491 appears here] and sayings from the Koran at the top. The Christian graves of the present era resemble the Russian ones, while formerly burial houses were used, and they are still preserved in many places (Fig. 494). Like those of the

[812 cont.]

764 Khevsur, they are built out of slate slabs with durable mortar, six to eight meters high, and provided with pyramidal roofs. Inside beams and boards are fastened at the long sides, on which the bodies were laid; when the boards were full, the bodies were thrown into a pit in the center. A variation of this is found in

Fig. 491. Osset burial-slab. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

[177] the burial houses of western Ossetia, which under the influence of Islamic architecture, are built like those of the Kabardin and Karachai; the foundation is square, the roof many-edged and pointed; the bodies lay inside on the ground. In other graves the bodies were covered with stones and on top -- similar to the old Serbian noblemen's sarcophagi -- stone boxes about two and a half meters long and one meter wide were erected. In connection with this last type unworked stones stand on top, as in Albania, which are about three meters high, 60 centimeters wide, and 15 to 30 centimeters thick. It has not yet been determined whether these two types are Osset or older in origin.

[812 cont.]

771 177 648 Religious beliefs and customs. The Osset are supposed to have been converted to Christianity by King Vakhtang Gurgaslan (454 to 499), which is not wholly believable since at that time they lived still farther north. In the tenth [813] century, when they lived on the Terek, Kuban, and Malka, they

764 531

Fig. 492. Osset gravestone of more recent type, near Alagir on the Ardon. (From M. v. Déchy.)

771 177 648 gave up Christianity for Islam for a short time, and this was repeated in the fifteenth century and again in the eighteenth century under the influence of the Kabardin, who had immigrated in the fourteenth century and were converted to Islam at that time. [Fig. 492 appears here.] Since then part (1/4 to 1/5) of the western Osset, particularly the Digor in the lowlands, has been Mohammedan.

[813 cont.]

346 172 [173] In many places in Ossetia are found old churches and ruins of them, whose erection is ascribed, as almost everywhere, to Queen Tamara (1171 to 1198) (Fig. 496). There are small houses built of stone without mortar, about six to eight meters long and four meters wide, with a span-roof, small door, and a window-hole in the east wall; inside, as in Svanetia, horns and antlers are piled up. On the other hand, there are no remains of old mosques anywhere except in the west.

764

Fig. 493. Old Osset grave-pillars near Alagir on the Ardon. (From M. v. Déchy.)

778 The churches often stand near or at the site of old sacred places (dzuar), where, as in Khevsuria, religious festivals are celebrated, marriages are consecrated, sacrifices offered, councils held, and the threatened find protection.

[776] Thus, there is one such standing near the church consecrated to St. Elias (Vatsilya) and to Mary (Mariam) near Bagini: a large pile of rocks, on which there is a high pole with a white cloth and nearby there are several sticks; in front, there is a long row of parallel stone seats and between them stone slabs as tables.

[814]

[778] [346] The most revered holy-place, Rekom (see Fig. 497), not far from the Tseya glacier, is a plank house with a greatly projecting span-roof and supported on both sides by four pillars each; over the small iron door there is an iron cross with curved arms and several bells with a Georgian inscription. A low stone [782] wall surrounds the sacred place and its front yard. Near the house lie horns from bison and other animals as [Fig. 493 appears here] the first booty of hunters, vessels, lead bullets, arrows, spear-heads, etc., and also in the inside there are many arrows, pictures of saints, censers, candles, ornaments, horns, antlers, rugs, etc. (Fig. 500). In the vicinity there are many shelter-huts of stone with board roofs for the pilgrims, who stay here for [158] two weeks from the first Saturday in May, offering sacrifices, feasting, dancing, and singing.

[171] Furthermore, the Osset, like the mountain Georgians, Cherkess, and Abkhaz, have sacred groves (idavog), from which [782] no one may fetch wood, except the priests; passers-by lay wood down as an offering or hang threads on the branches of certain trees. The Osset who live near the grove Dzuare-ɣade (= forest of the cross) near Abanokau in the Trusso gorge sacrifice sheep to [626] St. Elias, eat the meat, and hang the skin on the trees. They believe that anyone who fells trees here will be struck blind by St. Elias and can recover his eyesight only by sacrificing an ox.

[562] [815] Also, individual trees are considered holy, and women may not touch them, just as they may not enter the sacred places and groves. Thus, sacrifices are offered in front of a tree near Styr-Digor, into which an iron cross has grown, [796] and every summer a week long festival is celebrated at a hollow [782] tree on the mountain Tatar-Tun near Elkhot, in which the Osset lay pieces of cloth, money, and the like as offerings. Also, a [796] great festival is held every summer below the cave of St. Elias [789] (Vatsilya-legete) on the Lamardon, which commands great re-[782] spect and of which miracles are told; here, beer, sheep, and [787] oxen are offered to St. Elias, and the priest reports the visions and omens that appear to him in the cave. [Fig. 494 appears here.]

[815 cont.]

991 177 As can be seen from what has been said, Christianity and Islam have only superficially affected the beliefs of the Osset and have not touched their core. Those who call themselves Christians do go to church, observe the Christian fasts and celebrations, and speak of God, Christ, and many saints, and the Mohammedans perform the ablutions, fast during Ramadan, and have Friday as a holiday, but in addition they retain their veneration of their old gods and spirits, their sacred places, and their own customs.

764

Fig. 494. Osset burial-houses.
(Photo. A. Dirr.)

796 The highest god of the Osset, Khutsau, who is called upon in all prayers, lives in heaven; he is the lord over good and evil and dispatches it through his messengers. Barastŭr is the judge of the dead, Amon watches over the road from paradise to hell, and Kurdalegon is the heavenly blacksmith who shoes the steeds of the dead. Others are nature-spirits, such as: Makhamath, the son of the sun; Khemethan, the son of the moon; Buduri-isad, the protector of the fields; Khualerdar, the god of the harvest; Talvari, the protector of the livestock; Āvsati, lord of the wild game, especially the deer, ibex, mountain goat, and wild boar; Tutyr, lord of the wolves; Dubŭtŭr, protector of the waters, the fish, [816] and the fishermen; Runihara, god of health; and Saureg-gsuar, lord of the raiders. Others have become confused with Christian saints, except for the vague figure of the Son of God (K'iriste), for example: St. George (Vastirdzi, Vaskŏrguy),

[816 cont.]

776 the most popular deity, the protector of the traveler and of the roads; St. Theodore (Tutir), protector of the sheep; Nicholas, performer of miracles; St. Elias (Vatsilya), lord over thunder and lightning, as among the Russians.

766 [761] The Osset believe that anyone who has been struck by lightning has been shot by St. Elias because he has offended him. Friends and relatives dance around the deceased and take care to lament in order not to anger St. Elias. Then he is buried at the place of death or [Fig. 495 appears here] at the place where two goats have pulled him in a two-wheeled cart; a black buck is

[532] [764]

Fig. 495. Soul-cock of white cotton with red bands, tail and wings of paper, from a grave in Khad on the Sadon, western tributary of the Ardon (about 1/3 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.)

slaughtered at the grave, and the skin is hung on a long pole.

769 775 Ancestor spirits are Safa, the household spirit and protector of the hearth, and Fazbaden, protector of the kin group. The people fear and honor their ancestors, the souls of the dead, and offer them all that they needed during life so that they will watch over their kin group and grant it benefits. They erect huts for them in the woods near springs and place a bench and a bed inside so that the souls can rest on them; once or twice a year a feast is held there to honor the dead and food and drinks are left behind for them.

775 [761] The Osset believe that a court of six men in the next world decides whether the soul should leave the body when it is ill; in the case of an affirmative decision, death appears in the form of a wolf, and the sick person dies. The soul then floats

[816 cont.]

775 over the body as long as it lies in the house; at the burial, it again enters the body, which gets up in the grave three times, and then flies through seven rings into the next world, where the judge of the dead (Barastür) sends it to paradise (dzenete) or to hell (zindone). In the next world it again assumes the form of a human being and lives like one; when it gets old, it

346

Fig. 496. Osset church in Nusal on the Ardon.
(From G. Nioradze.)

775 rejuvenates itself by eating flesh (vsvar) from the dragon Ruimon. St. Elias frees the [817] people on earth from this congenitally [D61] blind dragon, from whose roaring they sicken and die; he fetters it with a chain, pulls it up by this, and heavenly spirits above hack off pieces of flesh with swords, from which the souls cook "vsvar" for themselves.

787 When a blood sacrifice is offered at a holy place or at a festival, the eldest man first seizes the fattened sacrificial animal (nivondov), cow, goat, or sheep, by the left horn, burns [Fig. 496 appears here] a cross on its snout and behind the right ear with a glowing coal while praying, pours spirits into the fire,

[817 cont.]
drinks some himself, and after him a boy. Then the animal is slaughtered by two youths; the blood is caught and covered with earth. The meat is cooked in a kettle and eaten at the feast; the eldest man throws a piece of cooked lung together with fat and cake (tsiri) into the fire. Afterwards the bones are laid together at the place of sacrifice, and the head of the sacrificial animal is hung on a tree or on a pole.

In addition to the Christian holidays of the Georgian Church or those of Islam, the Osset celebrate their old native festivals to honor the above-mentioned deities; among them there are "masculine" ones, that is, those celebrated only by men with blood sacrifices, and "feminine" ones, those celebrated by the women with milk sacrifices.

Before the harvest (kuft) they ask the god of the harvest, Khualerdar, for protection of the reapers against harm. His principal [818] festival takes place in the autumn. Then a hundred-weight sheaf of millet, barley, rye, and wheat is brought to the father of the house, which he has sorted out according to type of grain and has spirits, black beer, groats-beer, etc. made from it. At the feast, for which fowl, sheep, and oxen are slaughtered, the mother of the house scatters a few grains about and asks the god for much millet and for the extermination of rats and mice. [Fig. 497 appears here.]

A buck is slaughtered for the festival of the household spirit (giniata), and the blood is buried. At midnight the men say prayers of thanks in the barn and ask the protective spirit for blessings in the following year; afterwards they drink millet-beer (kumal) and eat cuts of buck-liver (akhsarfanbas), which are boiled, then wrapped, five, seven, or twelve at a time, in visceral fat, and roasted on a stick. Then the festive meal takes place in the house.

On New Year's Eve, on the last or the next to last Friday in December, the whole kin group [Sippe] sits at the hearth, and the father prays, thanking God for the previous year and asking for blessings in the new year. During the night the children wander about the village, [819] [Figs. 498 and 499 appear here] [820] throw grains into the houses, and sing that God may give

[820 cont.]

796 much luck, a son, health, bountiful harvest, success in hunting,
[852] and the like. The ending of this song, "Do not stop us, we must go to still other houses," is reminiscent of the one customary among us. On the morning of New Year's Day the
[872] father of the house starts a straw fire in the yard, so that his
[769] parents might have enough in the next world for the whole year.

346
133

Fig. 497. National shrine of the Osset on the upper Tseya-brook. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

796 [Fig. 500 appears here.] Then the day is spent in dancing, singing, drinking, and feasting, for which, among other things, there are large cakes (deda) and baked goods in the form of wheels, plows, harrows, etc., so that these implements may bring the kin group a good harvest.

[782] On the Wednesday evening between Christmas and New Year's Day, the father of the house slaughters a lamb in front
[776] of the door for the god of evil and asks him to accept the sacrifice, food, and drink, not to rob him of his animals and property, and not to harm his kin group, but instead to refrain from exercising his power and disappear. The lungs and heart of the animal are roasted, the meat boiled; after the others have left, the father of the house lays a piece of this on the

2: Byhan--91 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz
OSSeT RH9

346
351
133

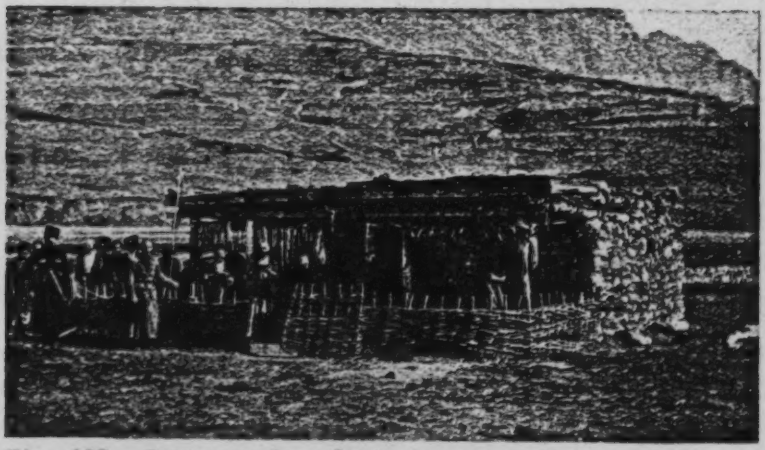


Fig. 498. Caset meeting, festival, and prayer house, Dargavs. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

344

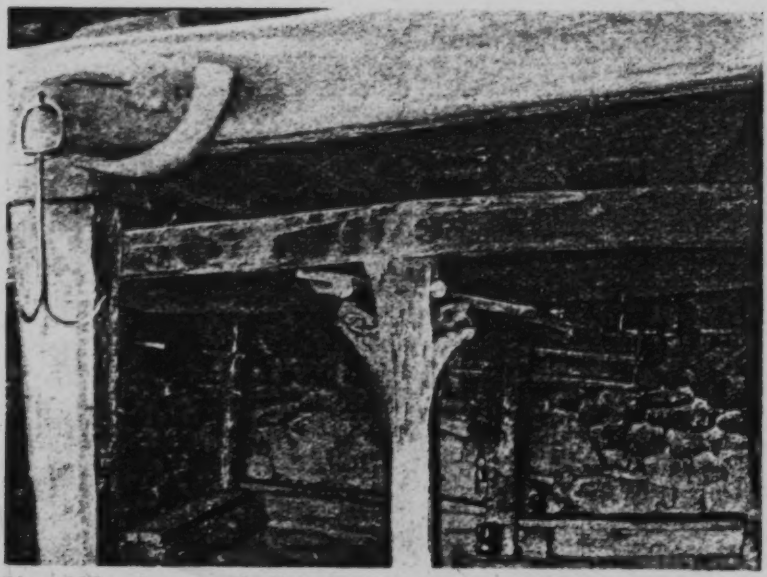


Fig. 499. Feasting hall in Dzivgisdzuar. (Photo. A. Dirr.)

[820 cont.]

796 table under a coat, and it is believed that the god eats from it. The meat is eaten at night at the festival meal, and the bones are thrown into a pit that the father of the house [821] has dug in front of the door. In order not to arouse the evil spirit, the name of the highest god is not spoken. This custom and the [179] belief in this deity indicate Iranian origin.

778 782 531

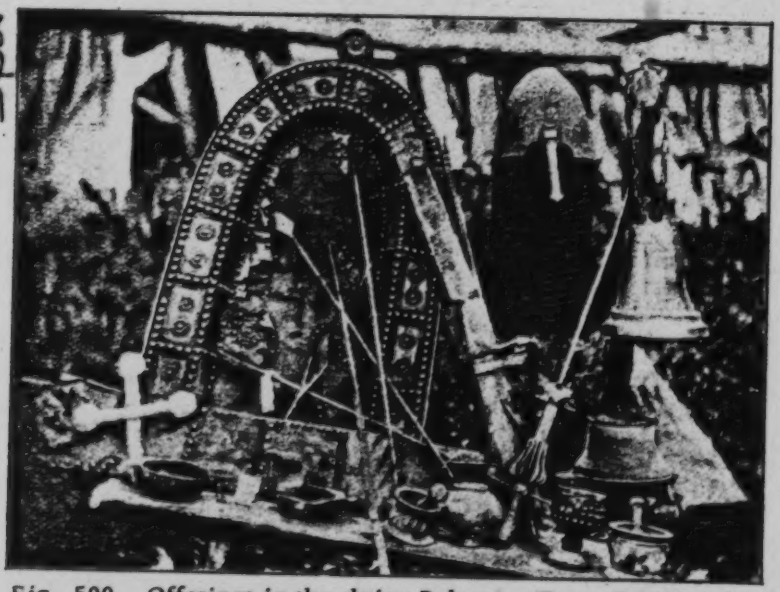


Fig. 500. Offerings in the shrine Rekom. (From G. Nioradze.)

796 The festival of Mary is a "feminine" one that the girls celebrate at the end of autumn in an old woman's house. The eldest of the girls asks the highest god and "Allarde" for a suitor and protection from disease and evil women, and then [Fig. 501 appears here] all of them take one of the prepared cakes, in whose filling they read the vocation of their future husbands: grain indicates a farmer, cheese, an owner of live-stock, etc.

788 [796] The worship of the god of health (Runibara) is also a concern of the women. When a sick person has recovered, the women from his and from neighboring kin groups go to a sacred tree, where the eldest of them lays down cheese-cake

[821 cont.]

788 and pours milk over it while singing sacred songs. Afterwards they eat the cakes and a dried sturgeon (kaf), which had previously hung over the head of the afflicted person. They tie [782] pierced silver coins on the tree as a consecrated offering; who- [753] ever steals them will suffer from the same disease, according to the belief of the Osset.

755 When a child is sick with smallpox, the mother and her [782] women friends, holding three flat-cakes with burning incense

415
531

Fig. 501. Osset drinking vessels: 1, vessel for spirits (goat horn) from the Dzuar Gulikau (žed) (1/7 natural size); 2, wooden beer-cup (kus) (1/6 natural size); 3, wooden beer-cup, double vessel, from the Dzuar Gulikau (1/8 natural size); 4, wooden beer-cup (kusgen) (1/5 natural size). Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.)

755 over its bed, ask the smallpox spirit (alaurdi) for a cure, and [822] in a song that they then sing, they promise him cheese-cake, the sacrifice of a steer, black beer, silver wings [Flügel], etc.

[822 cont.]

789 Evil spirits that could harm house and farm are warded off, as in Macedonia, with horses' heads and bones, which are hung on the yard wall or on the fence. Protection of children and ani-
751 mals from evil spirits -- the belief in the "evil eye" does not
[753] seem to be present -- is sought through amulets for example, little sacks of wool, iron, and poppies are hung around children's necks [Fig. 502 appears here.]

Fig. 502. Amulet for sacrificial ox, Osset (2/5 natural size). (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.)

671 Legal conceptions and customs. The fundamental features of Osset prescriptive law are the same as in that of the mountain
627 Georgians. Instead of blood vengeance an agreement (berdzkhali) can be reached with the help of an arbitrator (terkhoneleg); the wergild (kan-algan) is measured according to rank, sex, and age.
682 Murder can also be expiated in other ways: by ordeal, in which case a male member, even a boy, chosen by lot from the murdered man's kin group is allowed to shoot once at the murderer; or by faldisandsunag, that is, the culprit is pronounced the slave of the murdered man at his grave, both in this world and in the next, and he loses all rights, a disgrace that a free Osset could hardly bear. In the case of murder of parents, the

[822 cont.]

criminal is burned in his house with his family, and all his property is destroyed. Manslaughter resulting from carelessness, or in self-defense, and slaying a thief are punished by fines, as are wounds, which are evaluated differently according to body part and severity; livestock and barleycorns are used here also as units of measure (cf. p. 747 [untranslated]). Theft from strangers outside the tribe is not considered a crime and is punished only if the injured party knows the culprit. An apprehended thief may be beaten as long as desired, or he must return the stolen goods fivefold. The abduction of a girl is expiated by marriage and purchase-price, that of a wife, as well as seduction, is punished to the same extent as murder.

[823] Cats and dogs are used in the same way as among the Khevsur, and likewise the donkey. If someone cannot collect a debt or cannot obtain satisfaction for an insult, he slaughters one of these animals on the grave of the debtor's or offender's ancestors; the souls of the ancestors are then threatened in the next world by the disgrace of being tormented by this animal, a thing which no Osset would permit and would rather make payment or amends immediately. -- In the case of theft the Osset turns to a sorcerer (kurismetsok), who then goes to the house of the suspect or, in the absence of a definite suspect, goes about in the village with a cat, in order to indicate that the above-mentioned fate awaits the thief; the thief will return the stolen goods without hesitation. When taking an oath, the Osset seizes a dog by the tail, or a donkey by the ear; if he swear falsely, the souls of his ancestors and of his people must eat such animals in the next world.

After the death of the father, the inheritance is divided equally among the sons, and only two obtain a greater share: the eldest receives the house and some livestock, and similarly the youngest receives some livestock and weapons. The daughters receive nothing; on the contrary, when they marry, the purchase money goes to their brothers. If the eldest son is still a minor, the mother manages the estate. If the widow has no children or only daughters, she retains the estate for a year, until the memorial celebration, then she must turn it over to the nearest male

O
428
[589]

[823 cont.]
relative of the deceased, who supports her if she is not married by her husband's father or brother, as was formerly their duty. Children born of this new marriage or born out of wedlock are regarded as children of the deceased and inherit his name and part of his estate, since the woman belongs to the husband's kin group.

b) Other Iranians, Indians, etc.

C
563
177

Of the European peoples who have migrated in during the last century, only the Russians, as a ruling class, have exerted some influence on the spiritual life and the material possessions of the Caucasians; on the other hand, the Cossacks on the Kuban and Terek, as a result of friendly and hostile contact with the Cherkess, Abkhaz, and Tatars, have taken over much from them. [824] [Fig. 503 appears here.]

Of the Asiatic Indo-Germanic peoples, the Armenians (see Vol. II, 1, pp. 398 ff.) have played an essential role in the intellectual development of the plains Georgians (see p. 675 [untranslated]), and the physical relationship or admixture of the two, or to put it better, mixture of the native basic stock of the Near East with southern and eastern indigenous Caucasians, up to the Chechen in the northeast, appears visibly in many places (see pp. 31 f.).

As far as the Iranians are concerned, the Kurds (see Vol. II, 1, pp. 400 ff.) certainly came into contact with the Georgians relatively late and in any case have neither experienced any influence from them nor exerted any on them, or at most on their Gurian neighbors. The sect of the Yezid, who stand close to the Kurds in many respects, even with regard to their religious teachings, has settled in a few places in southernmost Caucasia (see Vol. II, 1, pp. 403 f.).

It is quite another matter with regard to the Persians (see Vol. II, 1, pp. 405 ff.), who, in part directly through trade or settlement, in part indirectly through Armenia, and later

[824 cont.]

443
291

Fig. 503. Persian fruit-seller in Baku.

563
[177] through the Tatars, have exerted a strong influence from the earliest times on southern and eastern Caucasia with regard to mental culture, art, warfare, etc. As a landmark of their power, the great stone wall, which extends from the national portal on the Caspian Sea, from the city [825] of Derbend [103] (Persian = gate-lock; Tatar, Demîr-kapû = iron door; Arabic, Bâb-el-abwâb = gate of gates), to the west 60 to 70 kilometers into the mountains, still stands today. It was erected by the Sassanid king, Khosrau Anôšarvân (531-579 A.D.), for protection against the invasions of the Khazar and Alan, against whom his father, Kobad (491-531), had already built a wall [512] of mud bricks that was strengthened by many towers and small citadels (kalê). Except for indigenous tribes, Khosrau entrusted the defense of the wall primarily to Iranian settlers whom he had brought over from Persia and the land of Sogd, that is Kharezmia and Samarkand. The inhabitants of the Kaitakh region, the Tabassaran, seem to be descendants of these settlers, and their name may be a contraction of Tabor-i-Khorassan (= host, people from Khorassan); likewise the Tât between Baku, Kuba, and the Babadagh and near Derbend. The former may have sprung from a mixture of Lezgin with

[825 cont.]
Iranians (cf. p. 674 f. [untranslated]) and accordingly are called by the Tatar āzade khalkh' or khelaiq (= free people), as are all Lezgin, in contrast to the Tāt, who are called raiyat khelaiq (= subject people). Their name is related to that of the central Asian Tajik (see Vol. II, 1, pp. 412 ff.), and their language is close [Fig. 504 appears here] [826] to modern Persian; it is also spoken by the mountain Jews in Dagestan and on the Terek. In their old cemeteries and near their villages there are isolated ruins of buildings that indicate Christianity in former times. Their relatives, the Talysh in humid, hot Lenkoran on the Caspian Sea, surrounded by Azerbaijani and Tatars, speak another variety of modern Persian that is supposed to contain much Old Persian.

563

[192]

As late as the first half of the nineteenth century, a remnant of the Old Persians, adherents of the teachings of Zoroaster or Zerdusht, the Geber, lived on the plain of Surakhane or Ateshga (= fire-land) near Baku, where a temple stood, in which they worshiped the eternal fire fed by a natural gas source. They had moved here from Persia after they had been driven from there and their main temple on the mountain near Yesd destroyed; they gradually

493
231
291

Fig. 504. Two-wheeled carriage, Baku region.

Caucasia RH1
Tat RK5
Mountain Jews

C [826 cont.]

563 died out, and Hindu-speaking coreligionists finally took their place as guardians of the shrine.

The few Gypsies who wander about southern Caucasia and are called Armenian Gypsies (Boša) are also of Indic origin; their language is West Armenian in structure, and the vocabulary is from various sources.

5. Semitic Peoples

The sect of the Nestorians or Chaldeans (see Vol. II, 1, pp. 404 f.) has a few settlements in the Karay steppe on the Kura and in Tiflis; they immigrated from Persia, from which they had been expelled in 1827. The Persians called them Nasran, the Armenians, Aissor; they speak Persian, but Aramaic is used for religious services. The women's dress resembles that of the Yezid (see Vol. II, 1, Fig. 270).

The Arabs, who penetrated into Caucasia in the eighth century and settled there -- Muslimeh ben Abdul Malik, who came to Derbend in 733, is supposed to have settled 24,000 (?) Arab families from Syria and from Mesopotamia in Tabassaran -- have merged completely with the Lezgin and Chechen (see p.31). From time to time, however, one meets people who still boast of their Arabic descent.

[827] Mountain Jews

T
161
101
T
197
T
175

The number of mountain Jews (Dagh-Tšufut) is supposed to come to about 30,000 (or 120,000 including those Jews who have immigrated from Russia in the last decades). In southern Caucasia they speak Georgian, in the east and north, Tatar.

In the seventh and sixth centuries B.C., after the revolution caused by the Iranian invasion, or the so-called Babylonian captivity, members of this people, called Hebrews and Israelites in Palestine, which clearly arose from Near Easterners with a Semitic strain in north Syria, settled farther north in Armenia

TaT RK5
Mountain Jews

[827 cont.]

175 and Asia Minor, where, during the last centuries B.C. and the first centuries A D , they played a definite role. They are traceable in inscriptions in the Greek-Scythian cities of south Russia from 100 B.C. to 300 A.D., and it is not impossible that the Karaim (see p. 869 [untranslated]) are in part descendants of these Jews.

175 177 Another branch of this people settled in Persia or Media and mixed with Iranians there. From there they spread farther along the west coast of the Caspian Sea and apparently about 750 A.D., in part as prisoners of war, reached the Khazar, among whom at that time there were not only heathens, but also Mohammedans (cf. the situation in old Turfan, see Vol. II, 1, p. 345). Some of the Khazar were induced by them to turn to Judaism (others were converted to Christianity toward the middle of the ninth century), and the Jews gained so great an influence that the Khagan accepted their religion a hundred years later, and his kingdom was afterwards considered Jewish until it was destroyed by the Varing, Svyatoslav of Kiev, in 966.

175 131 197 167 After the middle of the eighth century a larger host of these Jews, who had settled in Media and had adopted the Iranian language there, immigrated in the wake of the Arabs into Dagestan and Chechnya, where a number of place-names with an added tsufut (= Jewish) still attest to their presence there at one time. Those who remained behind in Media are supposed to have later become Mohammedans, and allegedly the Tāt arose from them (cf. above, p. 97). Most of the Tāt-speaking Jews who migrated into the Caucasian mountains live in Majalis in the Kaitakh district, south of Batalpashinsk, on the Kuban and on the Terek in the vicinity of Baku, and the Georgian-speaking ones in the Yelizavetpol district.

144 142 [828] Physically, the mountain Jews resemble the north Caucasians more than they do the European Jews, the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim. They have a slender, medium-tall to tall figure, broad shoulders, prominent cheekbones, aquiline nose, dark-brown skin color, black hair and eyes, and profuse beards. The women have an oval face with more delicate features and of lighter color, a pointed nose, narrow shoulders, and long, black hair.

TaT RK5
Mountain Jews

[828 cont.]

The men wear the Cherkess costume, which is widespread in the Caucasus: [Fig. 505 appears here] shirt with stand-up collar (beśmet), long cloth coat without a collar and with cartridge-pockets on the breast, narrow belt with silver or gold trimmings, from which a dagger hangs in front in a silver or leather sheath, fur cap, trousers, leggings, and light leather

Fig. 505. Mountain Jew. (Photo. E. N. Adler.)

shoes or mountain shoes fitted with iron.

The women's dress consists of a shirt, full trousers of silk or cotton material, satin dress with gold trimming sewed on it, which is quilted in winter, sack-shaped cap open on both sides (cf. p. 873 [untranslated]), woolen stockings, and pointed shoes of red or yellow leather. For ornaments they have large earrings with little pierced balls (cf. Fig. 472, 4), and many finger-rings, and in addition the girls wear breast-pendants of coins, coral, amber, rock-crystal, etc.; they color their hair and nails brown with khna or henna (see Vol. II, 1, p. 353), used throughout the Orient, and care for their teeth by chewing aromatic resin (sikis).

[see category 116, p. 57--Analyst]

[828 cont.]

342 The dwellings, like the Lezgin houses, are buried partly in the earth on slopes, built of stones, plastered with mud, and whitewashed on the inside and on the front side. The flat roof consists [829] of beams and a covering layer of reed, straw, and mud, and rests on a crossbeam which is supported by a carved pillar; it projects two meters in front and forms a front porch.

[574] Usually the houses contain men's quarters, women's quarters,
352 and a guest-room. The latter is carpeted with rugs, weapons
415 hang on the walls, and decorative vessels stand on wall-shelves.
[354] In the women's room, on one wall near the door and window, there is a cooking-hearth, and on the adjoining wall there are all kinds
[262] of tableware on shelf-boards behind a curtain; across the room there
[312] are clay vessels, up to two meters high, for wine, flour, and dried fruit, sacks of grain, dung-cakes, and firewood, and on the fourth wall the bedding lies on boards resting on stones, and
[262] under them there are vessels for milk, butter, and cheese.

The mountain Jews engage principally in agriculture
241 (wheat, barley, rice, tobacco, vegetables, fruit, and wine);
[386] formerly, before the introduction of synthetic dyes, they also made considerable profit from the cultivation of madder. Few
231 animals are kept, usually only buffalo because of their rich milk,
463 and donkeys because of their capacity for work. Those who live in the towns are merchants, peddlers, etc.

The division of labor among men and women is the usual:
462 the man performs the harder agricultural and domestic work, while the woman is obliged to take care of the household, the animals, and the ligher field-work. Neighbors and the young
406 people of the village help at many tasks, such as house-building
251 and drying and salting the meat that is hung in pieces or as sausages from the ceiling in the women's room as provisions for the winter.

574 Extensive hospitality is a solemn duty for them. When a guest arrives, they drop all work, call in distinguished men from the village, and entertain everyone amply with food and
[534] drink, during which there is also music with the harmonica and tambourine (tepa, a wooden cylinder with hide stretched over
000 one side. As appetizers, flat cakes, salt, onions, leeks, etc.

TAT RK 5
mountain Jews

[829 cont.] As appetizers, flat cakes, salt, onions, leeks, etc. are placed inside the ring of squatting guests, and then, after the hands are washed, the main courses: meat dishes, usually roasted on a spit (šašlyk, khinkal, durma, see pp. 43 and 73), rice with meat (plov, oš), groats-gruel, etc. The head of the house tears the meat apart with his hands and lays it before the guests. Solid foods are eaten with the fingers or with an eating-stick, liquids with a spoon.

The men customarily have a coreligionist or a Moslem in other villages as an intimate friend, with whom they can find shelter, and he often becomes their kinsman (kurdaš); they kiss [830] one another, exchange weapons, and promise to assist one another in case of need.

Blood vengeance is also still a law among them.

If, however, the kin group of the person murdered cannot take vengeance on a member of the kin group of the murderer within three days, the village elders try to reconcile them and to determine the wergild (100 to 600 rubles). If the murdered person's people consent, then the members of the enemy kin-group go to their house to ask forgiveness on their knees, and the former accept them as blood-relatives through a kiss. The murderer, however, is exiled to a distant village for one or one and a half years and after that is also acknowledged as a blood-relative.

Marriage is arranged by the fathers, and the groom must pay a rather high price (at least 150 rubles) for the chosen girl, who is usually thirteen to fourteen years old, as well as the expenses for her wedding-gown and for the celebration.

The wedding usually lasts from Sunday to Wednesday evening and generally takes place in winter, because there is still enough wine left at that time to last through the numerous rounds of drinks during the days of celebration. A feast is held on Sunday evening, to which a girl and a youth is invited from every house, and they form the retinue of the bridal couple. On Monday the boys elect the best man from among themselves, a "shakh" and a "vezir," and amuse themselves, as also on the following day, with dancing, games, music, and drinking. On Tuesday the wedding gifts are handed over, the rabbi records them, and the women of the village are entertained in the groom's house.

TAT RKS
Mountain Jews

[830 cont.]

585 grooms house. On the same evening the bride is led to the bath by her friends, and her wedding finery is put on her. The bridegroom is taken to the bath at noon on Wednesday, and afterwards he presents himself to the bride's parents, whose hands and feet he kisses, and they give him their daughter. The couple then go with their retinue to the synagogue, into the yard of which the bride is carried in the arms of a relative. Here the marriage ceremony is performed under a canopy by the rabbi, who, after the groom has placed the ring on the bride's finger and put a silver coin into her hand, reads the marriage contract, says prayers, and gives them wine to drink out of a glass, which he then smashes on a stone under the canopy. On the way home [789] flour and wheat and barley grains are poured over the young couple (fertility magic), and before the evening feast, in which [831] the whole village participates, the guests hand over contributions of money which are announced and recorded. After midnight the young couple retire into the bridal chamber, the door of which is guarded by a friend. After three hours the young husband appears again, and the women join the newly married girl, while the youths of the escort fire shots. The young wife offers each girl a glass of wine, which is given back with a coin. The youths are presented with cloths and the like by the bride's mother, who stays with the newly-wed woman and her sisters [831] for nine days in order to console and advise her. On the tenth day there is another family feast, and then the young married people are "set free" to begin their married life. For three or four months the young wife may not take off the veil with which she was covered before the wedding and may not leave the house.

586 If the wife is quarrelsome or ages too soon, the man may
587 take another one. If the man dies, his younger brother must marry the widow.

849 When giving birth, the woman stands or kneels and holds on to one of the cords hanging down from the ceiling; there is always a midwife present, and the women of the village
851 bring her all kinds of food. If the newborn is a boy, the event is celebrated with a feast; if it is a girl, no one bothers about
000 the mother and child. After eight days the boy is circumcised

Tat RKS Mountain Jews

852 [831 cont.] After eight days the boy is circumcised in the synagogue by the rabbi or the butcher; the godfather, sitting in the "chair of the Prophet Elias," holds the child for [551] this, while the father prays and gives it a name, his own or that of a relative. Girls are named after a strong animal or a noble metal. The mother stays in bed nine or ten days and takes a 846 bath after 40 days if she has given birth to a boy, or after 60 days if she has given birth to a girl.

764 When someone dies, all the inhabitants of the village drop their work and hurry to the house of the dead. The women come wrapped in a white cloth and wear yellow slippers as a sign of mourning, begin the mourning wail, scratch themselves with their nails, and pull their hair. The body is washed and dressed in a shirt, trousers, stockings, cap, and gloves, over which are also put the prayer-coat (sysit), the shroud, and a belt -- all of white linen. Then it is carried to the cemetery and buried in the grave without a coffin, the head facing east; the grave is covered with boards and earth. A memorial stone bearing an inscription giving the date of death, the virtues of the departed, 765 and some sayings from the prophets is erected on it. During the week of mourning (ovil) the relatives remain in the house, where the men read selections from the Holy Scriptures in the morning and evening, while the women mourn and weep for the dead, and on the seventh day the funeral feast (khairat) is prepared. Mourning lasts [832] for one year, and during this time the relatives may neither bathe nor take part in amusements. Every Monday and Friday they mourn together, and for eleven months, in the synagogue, the parents or the children of the deceased say the prayer for the peace of his soul (kadiš); 769 then the gravestone is set, and every year a memorial feast is celebrated on the anniversary of the death.

761 According to the belief of the mountain Jews, death is [776] caused by the Angel of Death, who smites the dying man with his sword or drips three drops of poison into his mouth from its 775 point. The soul floats over the dead body and, when the body is [764] carried out of the house, is threatened by evil spirits which the people try to appease with silver coins thrown high into the air. Then the soul flies to heaven, and after seven days, during which

TAT RK5
Mountain Jews

[832 cont.]

time it may still return to earth, it is judged by God. The conception of this judgment corresponds by and large with the portrayal in the Bible. Sinners go to hell or are condemned to wander for a thousand years, during which time the soul enters the bodies of various animals and suffers tortures until it is accepted in[1] where, as in Dante's description, it is tortured and thereby purified of sin, and then it may join the good souls in paradise. Hell, which is under the earth, is joined to paradise by a glowing wire over the seventh heaven, from which the soul plunges if it is still laden with sins; it can successfully make the crossing only when it is completely purified.

The prayer-houses are large halls with windows in three walls; on the windowless west wall there is a cabinet, the "ark of the Law," in which lie the scrolls of the Holy Scriptures with their silver wrappings hung with little balls and an altar-table, at which the rabbi reads Hebrew prayers during servives. In the middle of the hall there is a desk where he preaches on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. The mountain Jews turn to the west while praying. Women may not enter the synagogue itself, at most the vestibule, and their religious duties are confined to only three: to set out two small wax candles on Friday evening, to throw a dab of dough into the fire while baking bread and say a prayer at the same time, and to take a bath during the two weeks following menstruation.

Besides Jehovah and the religion based on the Bible, the Talmud, and the Mishna, they believe in the dominion of nature-gods and spirits that are far more tangible to human beings than the incomprehensible "one God." These deities resemble those of other Caucasian tribes, and this, together with other indications, shows that the mountain Jews have mixed heavily with indigenous Caucasians, if the latter do not [833] actually constitute their substratum; in any case, in this respect they stand in strong contrast to the Lezgin, among whom Islam, introduced much later, seems to have displaced the old native beliefs and cult almost completely. The gods and spirits are invisible, but several may assume human or animal form, for example, Ilch-Novi (= Elias), god of riches, who appears as a poor wanderer or

[1] [The word "hell," should appear here--Analyst]

[833 cont.]

[116] as a white ghost with a long beard, and Num-Negir (= he whose name may not be uttered), appearing as a white marten, the god of fertility and the protector of travelers. The water-goddess Ser-ovi, or "water-mother" Ledey-Ov (cf. p. 27), watches by the waters as a white virgin, so that people may not sully them; she attempts to lure young men to her in order to drown them and torments unprotected women in childbirth and rips out their entrails; she is afraid of iron, however, and therefore the mountain Jews wear steel finger-rings. Shehadu, the evil one, lives with his many subjects and their wives and children in the earth; they resemble people, but have horns and a tail like the devil, broad feet and hands with six fingers armed with claws, crooked mouths, and curved molars. Shehadu sends them out to ravish mortal women, to make men mad, possessed (šehaduni), and to strangle those who pour hot water on the ground. Invisible deities are: Semirey, Idor, Gudur-boi, and Kesen-boi. They pray to Semirey, the god of rain and the storm, in a cemetery during a drought, and, when it rains, the children turn their skirts and caps around and, dancing round-dances, sing a song requesting more rain. In the "Night of Idor" (Šev-Idor) at the beginning of spring, Idor, god of the plant kingdom, is prayed to for a good harvest, and at the evening feast dried or salted fruits are eaten. The gods of autumn and winter, Gudur-boi and Kesen-boi, are no longer worshiped; their names are now used only by young boys in songs during processions at night between the new and the full moon in November. Originating out of ancestor worship, the household spirit, Oshdeho-mar, who lives as a seven-headed snake under the floor of the house, as among the Great Russians, is himself invisible, but lets his sons be seen; he is the guardian of the well-being of the family and honey is given to him.

[301] [189] [821] [241] [242] [196] [592]

[196] The major festivals of the mountain Jews are Easter and Purim, [834] the festival of Mordecai and Esther, which they call Nissonu and Homonu. The women sew new clothes for these days, clean and whitewash the house, and prepare nut-dishes, and after the men have visited the prayer-house, everyone enjoys himself on these holidays with feasting, drinking, visiting one another, gifts of eggs, and dancing. At the festival Kushchi, the [919]

TGT Mountain Jews

[834 cont.] At the festival Kushchi, the

men spend the night until the seventh day, called Aravo, in the prayer-house reading the Psalms of David, while the young girls remain at home telling fortunes, since on this night God determines the fate of everyone for the coming year. On a day in spring the young people build bonfires in front of the houses, and the youths jump through the fire in the evening; it is believed that on this night Christ descends to earth to strike the Jews with all the harm possible, but that he spares the houses with a fire burning in front of them.

Despite the occurrence of much that is non-Jewish in their religious life, they are zealous followers of the Jewish faith and occupy themselves with detailed study of the Talmud. They therefore consider European schooling useless and harmful, and there are only a few schools among them for training rabbis and butchers.

For sickness, which is caused by evil spirits, they turn to sorcerers (khakum) for help.

In order to determine whether an "evil wish" has caused sickness, flour is thrown at the wall, and if it sticks there, this assumption is regarded as correct. The man who has wished evil is identified by means of pellets of bread thrown into the fire as names are uttered; if one of them jumps back out, it indicates the name of the wicked one. He is then asked for some spittle with which to rub the face and shoulders of the sick person, and the sick person is also given the pellet that sprang out of the fire, after it is rubbed with water.

When a child has cramps, it is believed that Num-negir is choking it because he has angered his parents, and a sorceress is consulted; the child is passed through a tripod, held out the window or door, or shut in a box in order to release it from the god's grasp. In order to ward off diseases, amulets (heykel), triangular pockets of cloth or leather, into which are put grass and stones wrapped with thread, are hung around the neck or sewed under the armpit or on the back in the outer garment. Various herbs are used for medicine, as well as oils, salts, mutton, meat from bats, hedgehogs, rats, the blood of black and white birds, etc.

Caucasia RH1
Kumyk RH7

[835]

6. Turkic Peoples

C 563 Among the Turkic-Tatar peoples in the Caucasus who have not mixed intimately with Caucasians, there are the Azerbaijani Tatars in the Persian cultural sphere (see Vol. II, 1, pp. 396 ff.) and the Tarakamá, the Karapapakh, and the Turks near Batum and Kars in the Ottoman-Kurdish sphere (see Vol. II, 1, pp. 385 ff. and pp. 400 ff.). The Trukhmen and the Mongolian Kalmyk in the northern steppes have preserved the essential peculiarities of their fellow tribesmen beyond the Caspian Sea (see Vol. II, 1, pp. 342 ff.) and in the Altai region (see Vol. II, 1, pp. 364 f.).

a) The Mountain Tatar

K 101 The Karachai and the mountain Kabardin or Taulu stand in the same relation to the Old Caucasians as do the mountain Jews. The Karachai live west of the Elbrus (Mingi-tau) on the source streams of the Kuban, which surround the Uchkulan (= three belts), up to the Teberda. In the east their neighbors are the Kabardin and Taulu, in the south, the Swan, in the north, Russians and the Abkhaz; to the west and southwest there are uninhabited mountain ranges. They appear to have obtained their name from a stream (karačai = black brook), not from an ancestor, Karacha. The Cherkess call them Karšaga-Kuǐ'a, the Georgians, Karatšioli, the northern Tatar, Kara-Tšerkes (likewise the Georgians in the Middle Ages: Kara-Džik'i; their country, Kara-Džakhet'i), that is, subjects of the Cherkess.

K 174 MM According to tradition, they immigrated from the Crimea about four centuries ago, but they are probably descendants of the Tatars who were driven out of the Kuban region by the Cherkess and fled into this avowed retreat area; here they mixed with refugees from Svanetia, Mingrelia, and Abkhazia, and with Cherkess. They paid tribute to the Kabardin before they came K 648 under the domination of the Russians in the thirties of the last century.

Kumyk RH7

[835 cont.]

698 Their eastern neighbors, the Taulu, were also dependent on the Kabardin. They undoubtedly descended from those
174 Tatars who lived in the steppes on the Kuma in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and had been pushed back into the mountain valleys after the destruction in 1408 of their great city Majar (which has nothing to do with the Hungarians, the Magyar) on the left bank of the Kuma, which was rich in [836] [Fig. 506 appears here] majestic buildings (therefore also called Kyrk-madžar = forty buildings), and in which the powerful Khan Mamai (died 1380) had his residence. The Taulu (= mountain
101 folk) are usually designated as mountain Tatar or mountain Kabardin; the Cherkess call them by the names of the individual tribes Tšegem-Kuš'a, Balkar-kuš'a, etc.; the latter are known among the Georgians as Bassiani.

142 The Karachai are noted for their delicate features and white skin; in any case very little of the Mongolian appears in their faces, which much more show the characteristics of the south Caucasians (Figs. 506 and 507). Like the Taulu, they have black eyes and hair and are medium-tall; the latter are supposed to have dark skins and scantier beards. The women are thick-set, muscular, and not as beautiful as their Kabardin neighbors.

291 The men's dress is Cherkess, and that of the women is similar to the Kabardin: full trousers, a red shirt slit on both sides to the hips, silver belt, bodice, and one or two outer dresses (bešmet) with narrow or full lower [837] sleeves, decorated with silver edging, buttons, etc. The girls cover their heads with the Kabardin cap (see Fig. 446); the women wind a colored cloth around it several times and let the ends hang down on both sides, or they put a short, white veil over it as well.

411 Their weapons are the usual ones; formerly they also had
[914] shields (kalkan) and two types of javelin (sungé, mudžurá).

The houses (see Figs. 508-512) are built of beams, or of
342 granite and slate among the Balkar, and usually have a small, open porch in front. Among the Taulu, as among the Lezgin, the roof is flat and made out of beams, twigs, and mud; the

[837 cont.]

142
307
891
516

Fig. 506. Karachai from Kart-Jurt on the upper Kuban. (From Count J. Zichy.)

342 Karachai have gabled roofs covered with straw, and the three lengthwise beams are supported on an arc-shaped crossbeam. Usually the houses contain only one room with small window-
[354] slits and a low door; the hearth with the chimney and kettle-
[352] hook is at one of the mud-plastered walls, which are hung with clothes, weapons, horns, felt rugs with decorations sewed on them, etc. Occasionally a defense-tower rises beside the
712 house. [Fig. 507 appears here.]

233 Economy. They engage principally in raising black fat-tailed sheep, goats, horses, mules, donkeys, and formerly swine; they keep cattle to a lesser extent.

[221] They graze their animals in the Kabardin lowlands in the winter, and in the summer in the mountain-pastures, where
[347] the herdsmen put up emergency huts: three or four poles and a piece of felt on top (koš). The fields are carefully fenced in

[837 cont.] The fields are carefully fenced in and irrigated, but the yield is small, since only limited areas of poor land are available, on which barley, millet, wheat, maize, beans, and potatoes are cultivated.

[838] Their domestic products are: cloths (šal), felt rugs (kiis), heavy coats (yamatše), rain-hoods (bašlyk), saddles and shoes of wild-goat leather, and goat-hair rugs. They take these products, as well as tobacco and the skins of bears, wolves, martens, foxes, wildcats, bezoar goats, etc., to Sukhum, Batalpashinsk, or to the Racha and to Oni in Imeretia and in return bring back textiles, copperware, rock-salt, etc., all on [Fig. 508 appears here] horses or, to the extent that there are roads, on small two-wheeled wagons with felt roofs. They also practice log-rolling as a secondary occupation.

The food consists primarily of bread, milk, cheese (bišlik), butter, mutton, and horsemeat. Favorite dishes are: mutton,

Fig. 507. Karachai woman. (Photo E. W. Pfizenmayer.)

either boiled or cut into small pieces and roasted on sticks over the fire (šišlik), or prepared with sour milk, garlic, and spice herbs (surpá), the head and brains of sheep, ram roasted on a spit and cornel berries in honey.

[838 cont.]

000 and cornel berries in honey. Drinks: kefir, beer from barley
273 (sra) and from millet (boza), brandy from barley and wheat,
[272] and lemonade from Beberitzen [?].

565 Society. The Karachai are divided into three stand-
[793] ings, like the Cherkess: princes (bi), noblemen (özden),
[567] and peasants (azat), aside from the many clergymen
[608] (mullah) and the former [839] slaves. [Fig. 509 appears here.] When a prince had sons by slave-girls or maids, he

133
342

Fig. 508. Dwelling, Karachai.

565 gave them to a foster-father for rearing (cf. pp. 19 f.), and
[608] after his death they had the same rights as their legitimate brothers.

595 The marriages of the Karachai, who usually take only
585 one wife, are performed by the clergyman and usually are
584 rich in children. The engagement takes place quite a while,
163 up to a year, before the wedding, and during this time the groom may not see the bride and also may not speak to her
591 parents. After a few months of married life together, the
585 young wife returns to her parents, often for one or two years, and the husband visits her there; during that time she may not appear unveiled before her male relatives. Abduction of
583 brides still occurs with an understanding [Fig. 510 appears here] [840] with the girl or her parents, but the bride price must be paid afterwards.

Kumyk RHT

[840 cont.]

347
712
351

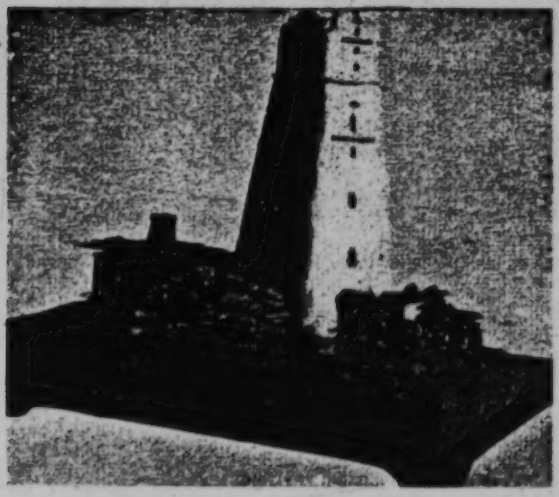


Fig. 509. Balkar house with defense tower in the style of Mountain Georgian architecture. Cherek valley. (Model in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.)

865 The rearing of the boys is strict. If one is constantly disobedient, he is admonished publicly in front of the mosque (mezdžét), and, if he remains incorrigible, he is expelled from the village.

764 Funeral obsequies also take place among the Karachai amidst the mourning cries of the women, while the men

347
712
351

Fig. 510. Floor plan for Fig. 509: left, dwelling with projecting roof; right, yard wall with gate; in the center, the defense tower. (From Count J. Zichy.)

Kumyk RH7

[840 cont.]

[Fig. 511 appears here] strike their foreheads with a knout (see Fig. 451) and prick their ear lobes with a knife. The cemeteries are surrounded by stone walls. On the Teberda a rectangular structure of eight to twelve thick beams and in other places stone boxes or sharply arched gabled houses (cf. Fig. 474) are erected on the graves.

Islam was first spread among the Karachai by the Kabardin Izaak in 1782; they are now zealous Sunnites, keep the fasts, and no longer eat pork. The mullahs train the boys in the mosque until they are able

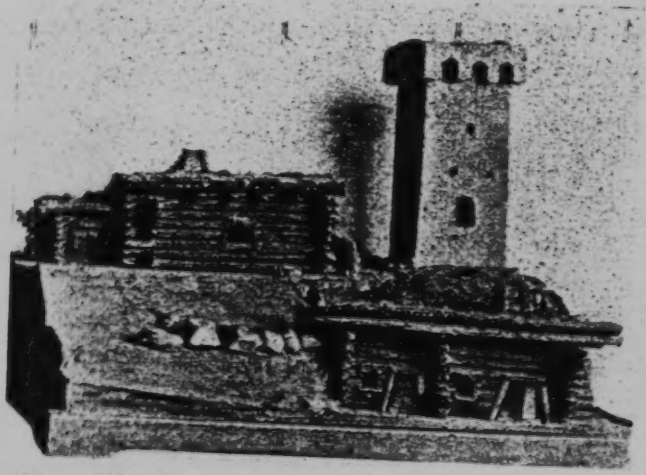


Fig. 511. Taulu farmstead in the Chegem valley, tower in the Swan style. (Model in the Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg.)

to recite from the Koran (tokhtá). The Balkar are said to have neither clergymen nor mosques.

Despite Islam they worship the old Turkic Tãgri as the highest god, and next to him St. Elias (nebi Iliya) as god of the mountains, [Pl. 30 and 31 appear here] [841] in whose honor they dance, sing, and make offerings of lambs, butter, cheese, milk, and beer (cf. p. 87). Like other Caucasians they have sacred trees and springs (cf. p. 25) and practice divination with the aid of barleycorns, beans, and stones, placing 41 in little piles in a certain order, or, like the Tatars, from the cracks in the shoulderblade of a sheep (see p. 28).

[See Category 116, P. 60 --Analyst]

2: Byhan--116 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz
Dagestan RH?
[840]

Pl. 30

192
302
291
516
391

Andi from Echeditl on the upper course of the Andi Koisu. (From M. v. Déchy.)

2: Byhan--117 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz.
Bashkir RF3
[840]
291
231
411
492

Pl. 31

Bashkir warrior. (Colored lithograph, Leipzig, 1813, in the Stadtgeschichtlichen Museum, Leipzig.)

Kumyk RH7

[841 cont.]

793 The clergymen occupy themselves with making amulets and
791 conjuring away illness (cf. Vol. II, 1, p. 358). There are few remains of Christianity to be found in this area, only a few
346 churches, among which there is one six meters long near Chegem,
843 at which pregnant women sacrifice an animal in order to have an easy delivery. [Fig. 512 appears here.]

341
712
354

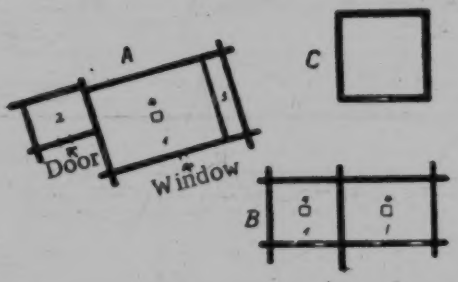


Fig. 512. Groundplan of a Taulu farmstead in the Chegem valley. A and B. Dwellings: 1, rooms; 2, vestibule for animals; 3, small room for supplies; 4, hearths with wooden flue. C. Defense tower. (From Count J. Zichy.)

b) The Kymyk

101 The Kymyk or Kumuk [Kumyk] (perhaps from Turkish
131 kym = mobile) inhabit the coastal lands between the Rubaschai and the Terek, the southern part of which, from Petrovsk
[133] and Chir-yurt, is taken up by the foothills of Dagestan, while the northern part is a salt desert permeated by the many watercourses, lakes, and swamps, overgrown with cane, belonging to the Aksai in the river district of the Sulak and the lower Terek.

[841 cont.]

195 [194] The Kymyk are probably the descendants of a part of the horde of Khan Mamai of Majar (see p. 110), who in turn presumably arose from the remnants of the Khazar combined with other Tatar tribes pushed ahead out of the east. The formation of the Khazar kingdom at the end of the sixth century or the beginning of the seventh appears to be connected with the establishment of the Black Bulgars (Kara-Bolgar) on the Kuban in the fifth and sixth centuries. After the overthrow of the Khazar kingdom in 966 (see p. 99), the peoples who had composed it did not vanish completely, but drew back into less accessible regions, such as are offered by the steppes between the Volga, Kuma, and Terek, and were reinforced there by parts of the hordes which, during the third and fourth Turkish migrations (Kuman, Pecheneg, and true Tatars) [842] in the ninth and thirteenth centuries -- the latter together with Mongols under Genghis Khan in 1221 and under Tamerlane in 1395 -- had split off and came to a halt there, as is shown by the structure of the Majar realm, to which a piece of eastern Dagestan also belonged in the fourteenth century. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries [148] the rulers of the Kymyk (šambalá, later šamkhali, see p. 32) extended their kingdom to the south and made incursions into the territory of the Georgians, who therefore asked the Russians for help; the latter destroyed the seat of the Kymyk princes, Tarku, near Petrovsk, and since then the Kymyk have remained subject to the Russians. [Fig. 513 appears here.]

190 Their dialect is closely related to that of the Nogai, which confirms the above account, as does their physical constitution.

142 The Kymyk are rather tall (1.70), less for the women (1.45 to 1.60); the arms are long, the legs short. The skull is broad, the forehead high and usually straight, the mouth and ears are large, the lips thick, the nose broad and straight, and the cheekbones protrude. The hair is black and sleek, and the eyes are light brown, rarely gray or blue. Flat Mongolian noses occur very rarely; somewhat more frequently thin, occasionally somewhat arched, and also pointed noses are seen, as among the mountain Georgians. Near Eastern faces are also found, and occasionally Arabian.

[842 cont.]

181 The Kymyk are good-natured, peaceful, submissive, serious, and industrious; they maintain a proper, dignified bearing
515 and insist upon cleanliness. They are not zealots; they therefore
771 even marry their daughters to Shiites, although they have been
582 Sunnites since the thirteenth century.

Their dress is that common to the Tatars (cf. Vol. II, 1,
291 p. 387 and elsewhere). Girls plait their hair in eight to ten
302 braids, women in 21 to 24 (cf. p. 883 [untranslated]); a few
[197] color it red with khna after the Persian custom (cf. Vol. II, 1,

142
302
291

Fig. 513. Kymyk. (From Count J. Zichy.)

302 p. 374). More commonly the brows are blackened. As
301 adornment they have silver finger-rings and large, silver ear-pendants oxydized black, with little chains hanging from them (cf. p. 680, Fig. 472, Nos. 3 and 4 [in untranslated portion]).

342 The houses are also built and furnished in Turkish-Tatar
[197] style (cf. Vol. II, 1, p. 388): work-rooms below, and, above, men's and women's quarters, whitewashed, each with a window and a door, and an open veranda in front. In addition to Tatar-
352 Persian [843] implements, such as low, round or rectangular
197 tables (tepsí, cf. Vol. II, 1, Fig. 233), decorated spoon-chests
415 (tšištakhá), copper plates (mešmafl), pilau-bowls (zené,
[854] serpíts), basting ladles (tšaltú), cradles, etc., Russian products
[439] have also gained entry, for example, samovars, the tea-service,
[252] mirrors, and iron stoves.

[843 cont.]

Economy. They engage in fishing, animal husbandry, bee-keeping, and recently a great deal in agriculture, which requires artificial irrigation. They own herds of sheep and horses (tabún) primarily. [Fig. 514 appears here.] The riding equipment consists of bridoon and stock saddle (artšák). To catch wild horses, they use a thin rope (arkán), one end of which is fastened to a stake by a slipknot through which the

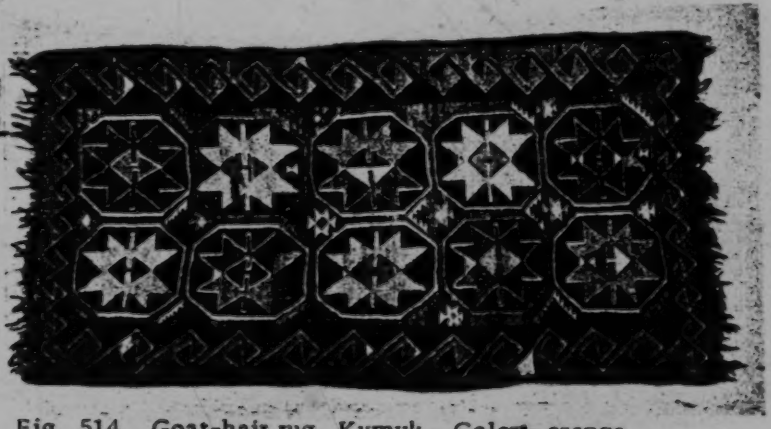


Fig. 514. Goat-hair rug, Kymyk. Colors: orange, brown, violet, light and dark green, yellow, and white.

rope runs and forms a noose. The mounted catcher slings it over the head of the wild horse and drags it to the ground; then the feet are bound together crosswise, the saddle put on, and the man goes off on the furiously kicking and bucking animal until it has become exhausted and permits itself to be ridden.

They used to trade most of their products, rugs (see Fig. 514), sheep wool, skins, livestock, salt, fish, etc., to Persia, in exchange receiving metal goods, silk and cotton materials, southern fruits, rice, spices, etc., which they often traded further to their Lezgin neighbors. The starting point of [844] this trade was their principal town, Tarku, and its port (now Petrovsk), to which the Lezgin also brought their products. The Kymyk exerted a great influence on this people through their trade, as well as through religious and political connections.

Kumyk RH7

[844 cont.]

trade, as well as through religious and political connections.

The Kymyk have the aristocratic social order of the steppe peoples (cf. Kirgiz, Vol. II, 1, pp. 362 f.), with princes and noblemen as leaders and rulers of the common people and the slaves, just as the Khazar were formerly divided into Black and White.

Besides dances, of which one (vararíš) resembles the Lezgin dance and the other (bulká) is danced by poorer men or women begging for alms, musical dramas are popular among them and are performed by youths and girls at weddings and similar events: contests between boys and girls in teasing verses (sarynd = raillery), or the "love-cane" (süydüm-tayák), in which they strike one another on the shoulder with a staff and alternately sing satirical and amorous songs.

2: Byhan RI3 Abkhaz

ILLUSTRIERTE VÖLKERKUNDE

IN ZWEI BÄNDEN

Unter Mitwirkung von
Dr. A. Byhan, Professor Dr. A. Haberlandt,
Professor Dr. M. Haberlandt, Dr. R. Heine-Geldern,
Dr. W. Krickeberg, Dr. R. Lasch,
Professor Dr. W. Volz
herausgegeben
von

Dr. Georg Buschan

II

Zweiter Teil

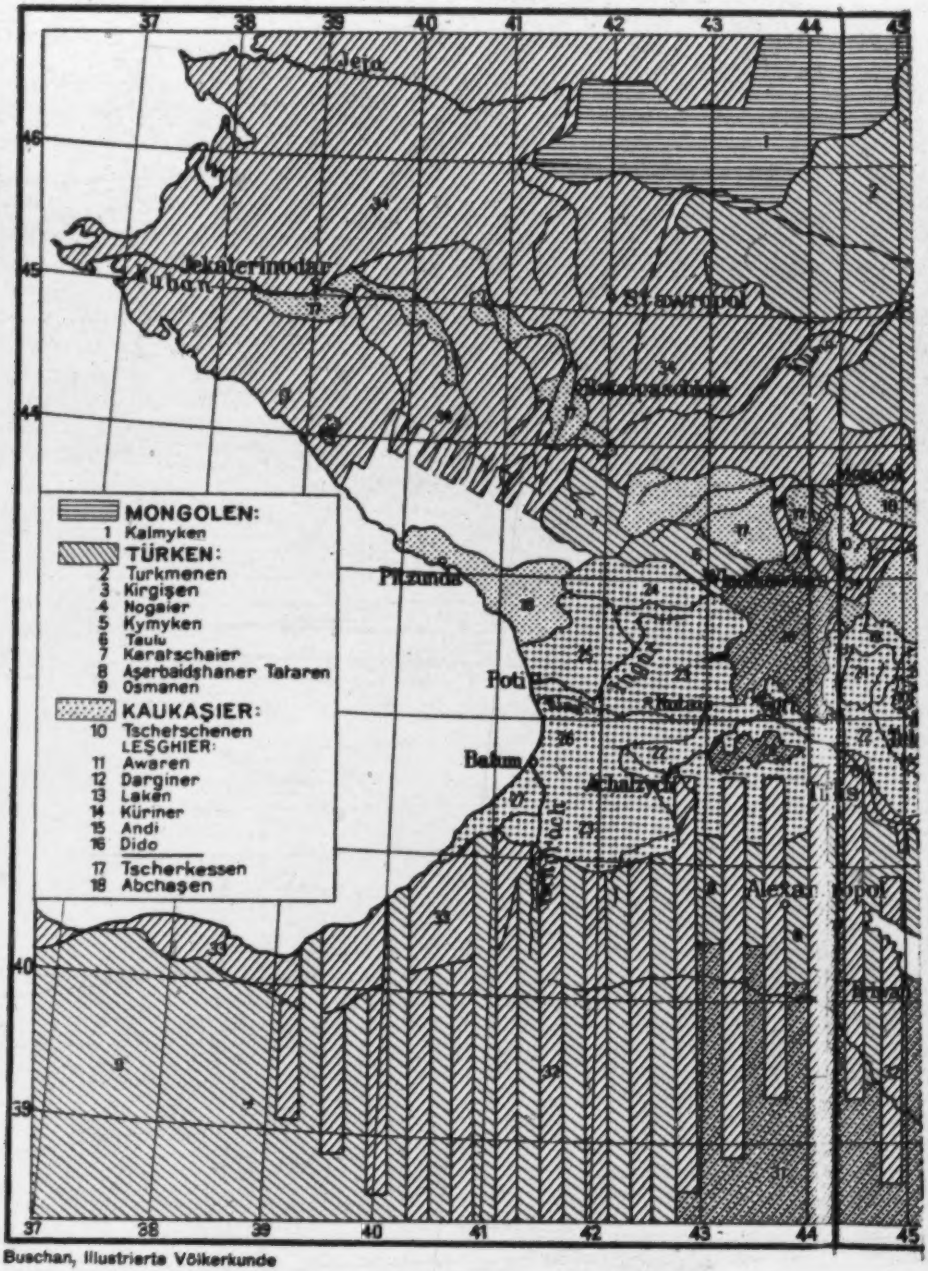
Zweite und dritte, vollständig umgearbeitete
und wesentlich vermehrte Auflage

Stuttgart 1926
Verlegt von Strecker und Schröder

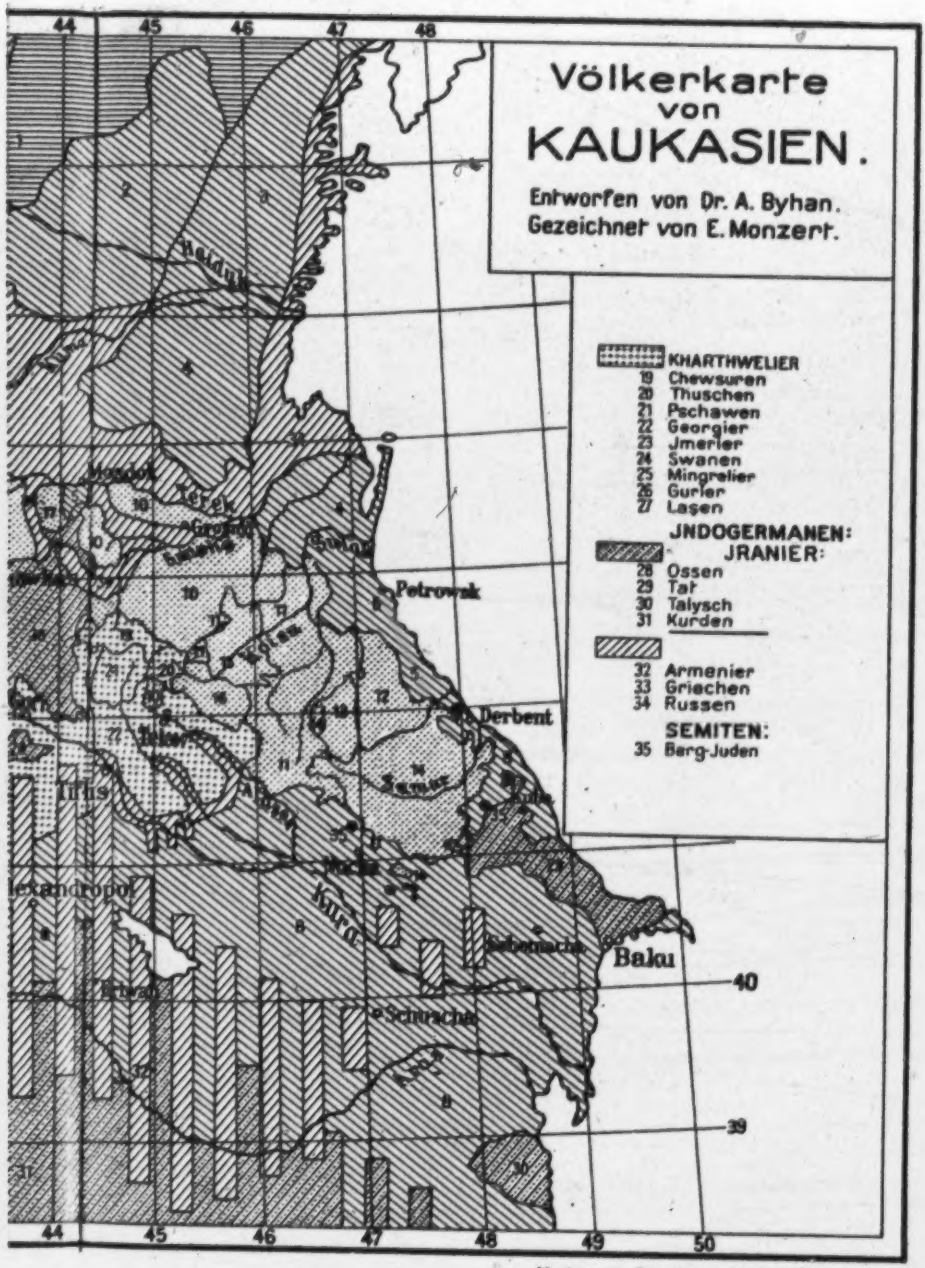
[TITLE PAGE]

b) Die Tscherkessen und Abchasen

Die Tscherkessen werden von den lateinischen und griechischen Schriftstellern des Altertums Kerketai, Kerketioi, Kerketaioi, Syndyi, Zygoi, Zichoi genannt; die Abchasen heißen bei Plinius (29 bis 70 n. Chr.) und Arrian (100 bis 160 n. Chr.) Apsilen, in georgischen Chroniken Ap'ĭili und Ap'sari. Abchasien war in den ersten Jahrhunderten n. Chr. von Georgien abhängig, darnach von Lasien; 786 wurde es selbständiges Königreich und von Bagrat III. (980 bis 1014) durch Heirat wieder mit Georgien vereinigt. Später machte es sich unter dem Geschlecht der Scherwaschidse wieder unabhängig, bis die Russen 1845 erst den südlichen Teil, Samursakhan, und 1863 das übrige Abchasien besetzten. Die Tscherkessen sollen früher das nördliche Vorland bis über die Kuma hinaus in Besitz gehabt haben, später aber durch die Tataren und



[p. 749 (A) - originally p. 672 (A)]



Verlag von Strecker und Schröder, Stuttgart

[p. 749 (B) - originally p. 672 (B)]

Abb. 441. Abchasen
(Nach Graf J. Zichy)

seit 1777 durch die Russen über den Terek, den Kuban und die Malka zurückgedrängt worden sein. Infolge des tatarischen Druckes waren im vierzehnten Jahrhundert die tscherkessischen Stämme, welche an der Küste des Schwarzen Meeres saßen, von da weggezogen und hatten sich zwischen den Nogaiern, den Karatschaiern und den Taulu in der Landschaft Kabarda eingeschoben, von der sie ihren heutigen Namen haben. Nach der Niederwerfung des Aufstandes im Daghestan und der endgültigen Besiegung der jahrzehntelang hartnäckig Widerstand leistenden Tscherkessen im Herbst 1864 wanderten die meisten, über vierhunderttausend, und mit ihnen zahlreiche Abchasen, unter ihnen der ganze Stamm der Ubychen, nach Kleinasien, Syrien und der Balkanhalbinsel aus.

Von Wuchs sind die Abchasen (s. Abb. 441) mittelgroß, kräftig gebaut und hager. Der Schädel ist etwas abgeflacht, die Nase kurz, gerade oder gewölbt, die Farbe des Gesichtes mattbraun, die der Augen, Haare und des Bartes dunkelbraun bis schwarz. Blaue Augen und helle Haare sind selten. Bei den südlichen Samursakhanern zeigt sich Mischung mit Georgiern (Mingreliern), sie sind höher und stärker gebaut und haben weichere Gesichtszüge.

Die Tscherkessen (s. Abb. 442) sind höher gewachsen als die Abchasen, schlank, haben breite Schultern und schmale Hüften. Der Schädel ist mittelgroß und birnenförmig, die Nase schmal und gerade. Das Gesicht länglichrund; Haare und Augen sind braun. Die Mädchen und jungen Frauen werden wegen ihrer Schönheit gerühmt.

Die Tscherkessen sind stolz, rachsüchtig, verschlagen, verwegen, kriegstüchtig, ausdauernde Reiter und Fußgänger, sichere Schützen und galten früher als arge Räuber. Die Abchasen sind ähnlich veranlagt, unterscheiden sich aber von jenen durch größere Reizbarkeit, Unbeständigkeit, Schwatzsucht, Höflichkeit und sind wie die Mingrelier als Diebe verrufen.

Abb. 442. Tscherkesse
(Nach R. v. Erckert)

Die Abchasen bestehen jetzt aus vierundzwanzig bis fünfundzwanzig Geschlechtern oder Gemeinschaften; als Stämme wurden früher genannt: die Ubychen zwischen Chamise und Schache, die Abadsechen zwischen Pschekups und Bjelaja, die Dschigethen zwischen Schache und Msymta, weiter südlich bis zum Bsyb die Bsubben, bis zum Kodor die eigentlichen Abchasen und in deren Hinterland die Tsebeldiner, bis zur Galisga die Abschawen und angrenzend an Mingrelien die Samursakhaner.

Tracht. Die Abchasinnen tragen tscherkessische oder jetzt gewöhnlich europäische Kleider (s. Abb. 443), die Männer den tscherkessischen Rock (s. Abb. 441); den Kopf lassen sie sich gewöhnlich kahl scheren.

Die tscherkessische Männertracht hat bei den Kosaken und

Abb. 443. Abchasin

in ganz Kaukasien bis zu den Unterlandsgeorgiern im Süden weite Verbreitung gefunden, und die Frauentracht ist von den benachbarten Abchasen, Karatschajern und Ossen übernommen worden. Die Männertracht (s. Abb. 442) setzt sich zusammen aus einem Hemd (jana) aus weißem Leinen oder rotem Taft, bauschigen Hosen, einem seidenen, gestickten Untergewand mit Kragen, einem an der Brust offenen, langen Überrock (tsié) aus schwarzem oder grauem Tuch mit Patronentäschchen (chazyr) auf der Brust, schmalem Gürtelriemen, ledernen Gamaschen, Sandalen aus Haut oder Lindenrinde, Mütze (papach) aus weißem oder schwarzem Schaffell (s. Abb. 444), dazu bei schlechtem Wetter einem schwarzen Mantel (tšauka, burka) aus Ziegen- und Schafwolle mit Kapuze (g'etapt), der so umgelegt wird, daß der rechte Arm frei bleibt. Die Haare scheren sie kurz ab bis auf einen geflochtenen Schopf (haidar). Am Gürtel tragen sie außer dem Haus einen Dolch (kama, s. Abb. 449), an einem Wehrgehänge den Säbel, dessen Klinge oft damaszener, chorassaner, ungarischer oder lesghischer Arbeit, und die oft mit Silber oder Gold auf schwarzem Grunde, wie auch der Beschlag des Pferdegeschirres und andere Teile der Bewaffnung eingelegt ist. Diese besteht weiter aus: Pistole (s. Abb. 450), Flinte mit achteckigem damaszierten Lauf, früher aus Bachtschi-Sarai in der Krim bezogen, in einem Futteral aus Fell, Leder oder Filz (s. Abb. 451, 1), Knute (s. Abb. 451, 8, 10). Früher gehörten außerdem noch dazu (s. Abb. 445) Panzerhemd (affé) mit Wattefütterung, Arm-

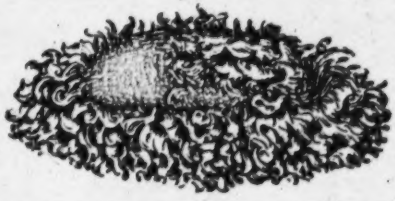


Abb. 444. Kabardinermütze aus Lammfell
(Nach Graf J. Zichy)

schienen (abchumbuch), Handschutz (aśteld), Helm (taś) oder Schädelhaube (kip'a), Streitaxt, Wurfspeer mit Widerhaken, Bogen, Köcher und Pfeile. Als Fiederung der Pfeile durften nur die Edlen weiße Adlerfedern verwenden.

Die Teile der Frauentracht sind (s. Abb. 446): ein dünnes Hemd aus roter Seite (kanaús) mit weiten Ärmeln, darüber ein Untergewand aus gestreiftem Seidenzeug mit Ärmeln, die oben eng, unten weit und gefältelt sind, über dieses eine Schoßweste mit Gold- und Silberstickereien und Verschnürungen aus silbernen Kugeln und Platten, Hosen meist aus gelber Seide (bei Abchasenmädchen früher weiß, bei Frauen rot, bei Witwen blau), Ledergürtel mit silbernen und goldenen Beschlägen, Schuhe aus weichem Leder und gold- oder silbergestickte spitze Überschuhe mit dicken Sohlen und hohen Hacken, auf dem Kopfe eine 15 cm hohe kegelförmige Kappe aus Samt, die mit goldenen und silbernen Borten, Knöpfen, Platten und Kettchen reich verziert ist, endlich ein weißer, durchwirkter Schleier, der von der Kappe lang herabhängt. Der Zopf wird mit weißen Kattunstreifen durchflochten, die bis zu den Füßen herabhängen. Unter dem Hemd tragen die Mädchen beständig ein enges Leibchen aus Leder, das erst bei der Hochzeit abgenommen wird.

Abb. 445. Tscherkesse in voller Rüstung nebst Frau und Mädchen. Im Hintergrund Kuppelzelte (Nach Spencer, 1837)

Wohnung Die Gehöfte der Abchasen liegen nicht dorfweise beieinander, sondern weitverstreut und in dem üppigen Baumwuchs der Gärten versteckt, in der Nähe einer Quelle oder eines Baches. Die neueren Wohnhäuser sind nach mingrelischer und imerischer

Weise aus Bohlen auf Pfählen errichtet. Die älteren Hütten sind die urtümlichsten aller kaukasischen Waldgebiete und ähneln den Hütten in den Sommerlagern makedonischer Hirten.

Abb. 446. Kabardinerin (Nach Graf J. Zichy)

Das Haupthaus (p'ats'cha) ist viereckig, die Wände sind nur aus Zweigen geflochten und selbst im Winter selten mit Farnkraut belegt. Das flache oder schräge Strohdach wird von zwei schrägen, oben zusammenstoßenden Pfosten (amakrati-chkwa = Schere) an der Vordertür, einem Pfosten an der Rückwand und vier vom Hause etwa 30—60 cm abstehenden Eckpfosten gestützt. Der vordere Teil ist der Wohnraum, der hintere, abgeteilte, für Gäste und im Winter für das Vieh bestimmt. In der Mitte liegt der Herd; darüber hängt der Kessel und zuweilen eine sich nach oben stark verjüngende Esse. Daneben steht eine lange, breite Bank und an der einen Wand eine Pritsche aus Brettern, darauf die Betten und eine Truhe. In einem Winkel sind der Schleifstein, der Mörserstein, Körbe, Tröge, Geräte zur Hirse- und Maisverarbeitung, Milchkübel, Tassen und Löffel aus Holz und Horn, Kürbisflaschen u. a. untergebracht, und an den Wänden hängen Pferdegeschirre, Sättel, Waffen.

Eine andere Art (chkwatsu) entspricht in ihrem Zwecke gewissen Pfahlhütten in ostserbischen und ostmakedonischen Gehöften: es sind Schlafhütten für junge Ehepaare. Sie stehen im Hofe neben dem Haupthaus, sind rund, aus Haselruten geflochten, die Wände etwas nach innen geneigt. Das Dach ist kegelförmig und oben mit Weidenruten gebunden, die ganze Hütte mit Schilf, Farnkraut, Windhalm und ähnlichem gedeckt.

Im Hofe, der von einem Flechtzaun umgeben ist, befinden sich außerdem noch eine Sommerküche aus Flechtwerk, geflochtene Speicher auf Pfählen (vgl. Abb. 246, 247) zur Aufbewahrung der Maiskolben, ein Weinhaus mit der Kelter, Fässern, Körben für die Weinlese und ähnlichem. Letztere sind rund, unten spitz, ungefähr 60 cm hoch, 15 cm breit; oben ist ein großer Haken angebunden, um sie beim Abpflücken der Trauben an den Ästen der hohen Rebenbäume wie unsere Obstkörbe aufhängen zu können.

Auch die tscherkessischen Gehöfte liegen gruppenweise in Ge-

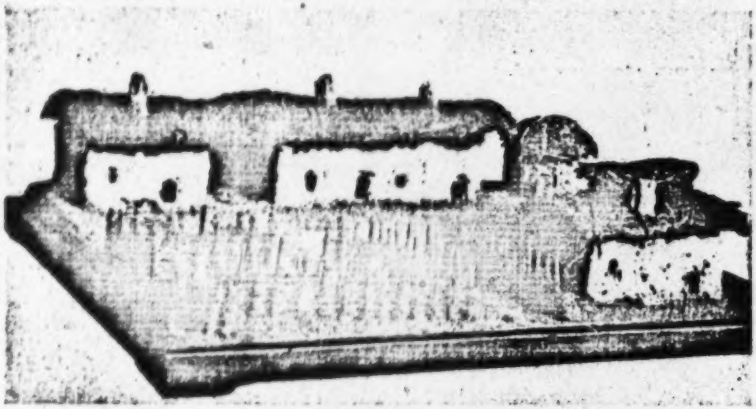


Abb. 447. Tscherkessisches Gehöft im Dorfe Biberd
(Modell im Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

hölzen von Eichen, Buchen, Ulmen, Elmen, Eschen, Birnen- und Zwetschgenbäumen versteckt. Das Wohnhaus ist aus Lehmziegeln oder lehmüberstrichenem Flechtwerk gebaut, das Satteldach mit Stroh gedeckt, das durch Stangen festgehalten wird, und ragt vorn oft wie bei den balkanischen und den Tatarenhütten in der Krim 1 bis 1¼ m vor. Die eine Seite des Hauses nimmt gewöhnlich der Stall ein, die andere die Wohnräume; zu ihnen führt je eine Tür auf der Längsseite. Die Inneneinrichtung ist wie die des abchasischen Hauses; die Herdstelle jedoch befindet sich hier an einer Außenmauer, die darüber hängende Esse aus Flechtwerk ist birnenförmig und ragt 1½ bis 2 m über das Dach hinaus. Im Hofe stehen außerdem ein größerer Winterstall für Schafe und Ziegen und der auf sechs mit flachen Steinen belegten Pfosten von 1¼ m

Höhe und auf vier von sechs kleineren Steinen gestützten Balken ruhende Speicher (s. Abb. 248), dessen Innenraum in vier Fächer für die verschiedenen Getreidearten geteilt ist; das Getreide wird sonst auch (wie in Albanien) in birnenförmigen, mit Heu ausgepolsterten, mit Brettern und Erde verschlossenen Gruben aufbewahrt. An den von einem Flechtzaun umhegten Hof schließen sich die eingefriedigten Felder an.

In früherer Zeit, als die Tscherkessen mit den Tataren und mit den Russen beständig im Kampfe lagen, schlossen sie sich enger zusammen. Die Häuser bildeten zu vierzig bis fünfzig einen Kreis, in dessen Mitte zur Nacht das Vieh und die Unbewaffneten untergebracht wurden. Etwa 15 m von den Häusern entfernt standen die Aborthütten. In der Landschaft Temirgoj (K'emirk'ehe) am mittleren Kuban waren die Dörfer mit einem doppelten Pfahlzaun von 3 m Höhe mit einer 1¼ m breiten Erdfüllung umgeben, in der Schießscharten ausgespart waren. Auf der Innenseite lief ein Dach aus Stroh oder Rohr herum, unter dem die Ackergeräte und das Vieh eingestellt wurden. Die enge Eingangspforte in die Verschanzung wurde mit Holzblöcken und zweirädrigen Wagen verrammelt. Die Schanzen, welche die Bauern auf ihren Feldern errichteten, waren ebenso angelegt, nur daß sie statt der Pfähle Flechtwerk hatten. Die Hirten bauten sich auf vier Pfählen ruhende Warttürme aus wagrecht aufeinander gelegten Balken von 8 m Höhe, die ebenfalls mit Schießscharten ausgestattet waren.

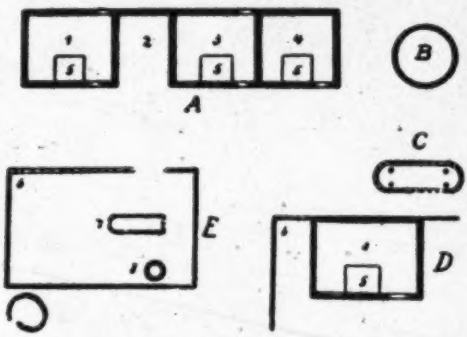


Abb. 448. Grundriß eines tscherkessischen Gehöftes im Dorfe Biberd. A Wohnhaus: 1, 3 und 4 Stuben mit (5) Herdstellen und Schornsteinen aus Weidengeflecht, 2 offene Halle; B kleiner geflochtener Stall mit Strohdach; C geflochtener Maisspeicher auf Pfählen; D Haus mit Herdstelle (5) und Schornstein, als Wintorstall dienend, von einem Geflechtzaun (6) umgeben; E eingezäunter Viehhof mit Trögen (7 und 8)

Auf ihren Kriegs- und Raubzügen verwendeten die Tscherkessen auch Zelte, die sie wahrscheinlich von den benachbarten Tataren übernommen hatten. Die einfacheren bestanden aus zwei schrägen, oben zusammengebundenen Stangen, über die die Filzdecken gehängt wurden, und die Haltetaue befestigte man im Walde an irgendeiner Wurzel. Die besser ausgestatteten hatten die Bienenkorbform der tatarisch-mongolischen (Bd. II, 1, Abb. 231, 232); sie waren

innen mit Binsenmatten behängt und mit Teppichen ausgelegt, hatten oben ein Rauchloch und vermutlich auch Scherengatter und festes Dachgerüst wie jene inneraslatischen.

Wirtschaftliches. Die Abchasen trieben bis vor kurzem vorwiegend Viehzucht, obwohl das Klima dafür ungünstig ist, und die Rinder z. B. deshalb klein sind. Die Hirten wanderten mit dem Vieh von Weide zu Weide und bauten sich ihre geflochtenen Hütten (s. o. S. 754), die sie mit sich nahmen, jeweils wieder auf. Jetzt scheint der Ackerbau zu überwiegen; die Hauptfrucht ist Mais, früher war es Kolbenhirse, weniger Weizen. Außerdem bauen sie Bohnen, Lein, Hanf, Baumwolle, Tabak (der in Suchum erzeugte gilt als der beste im Kaukasus), Reis, Klettergurken, Kürbisse, Melonen, viel Reben und Obst: Äpfel, Birnen, Pflaumen, Feigen, Kastanien, Granaten, Nüsse u. a. Beerensträucher wachsen an den Hängen in reicher Menge, deren Früchte werden aber wie in Georgien wirtschaftlich fast gar nicht verwendet.

Abb. 449. Tscherkessischer Dolch mit grüngefärbtem Knochengriff und silbernen Beschlägen (1/3 n. Gr.) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

Die Kabardiner beschäftigen sich noch jetzt hauptsächlich mit der Zucht von Schafen, Ziegen, Rindern und von Pferden, die arabisches Blut in sich haben, höher als die abchasischen, stärker gebaut und wegen ihrer Schönheit und Zähigkeit bekannt sind. Die übrigen Tscherkessen sind mehr zum Ackerbau übergegangen, seit die Kämpfe mit den Russen aufgehört haben.

Das Land, das sie besäen wollen, schwenden sie, brennen das Gras wie auch auf den Weiden und Wiesen im Frühjahr ab, dann pflügen und eggen sie mit der Strauchegge (s. o. S. 686); mit Mist gedüngt wurde bis vor kurzem nicht. War das Land früher rings um ein Dorf ausgesaugt, so brachen sie die Hütten ab und ließen sich an einem anderen Orte nieder.

Während man das Getreide in der Wasser- oder Pferdemühle mahlt, wird Hirse mittels einer Anke (s. o. S. 693) und einer mit der Hand gedrehten Holzscheibe, wie sie auch in Finnland gebräuchlich ist, enthülst und von den Frauen mit einer Handmühle gemahlen.

Bienen werden hier ebenso wie in Abchasien viel gehalten.

Die Bienenkörbe gleichen den bei uns gebräuchlichen, sie sind aus Lindenrinde geschnitten oder aus Weidenreisern geflochten und mit Lehm und Kuhmist beschmiert. Als Regenschutz legt man ein dickes Strohgeflecht oben darauf.

Ausgeflogene Schwärme fängt man mit einem an einer Stange befestigten Rindenhut ein. Im Juli und August stellt man die Körbe in den Wäldern der Vorberge auf, sonst in der Nähe der Dörfer.

Den Frauen obliegen dieselben Verrichtungen wie bei den Bergvölkern, doch helfen bei den Abchasen die Männer auf dem Felde, im Obst- und Rebgarten und bei anderen Arbeiten mit. Die Frauen stellen u. a. auch Saffianleder (tsuš) her, aus dem Gürtel, Schuhe, Bettdecken u. a. gemacht werden. Die Männer schnitzen außer Gefäßen und Geräten schöne Löffel aus Holz und Horn, bauen Wagen (ykn) mit zwei Scheibenrädern, die aus einem Stück Holz gehauen sind, und deren Axe sich mitdreht (vgl. Abb. 416). Schießpulver stellten sie sich früher selber her, den dazu benötigten Salpeter (gin-chuš = Pulversalz) laugten sie aus Schafmist aus.

Abb. 450. Tscherkessische Pistole mit Feuersteinschloß, Knochenknauf und silbernen Beschlägen (1/4 n. Gr.)
(Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

Von Handwerkern gibt es fast nur Silber- und Eisenschmiede; erstere beschäftigten sich früher insbesondere mit der Ausschmückung von Waffen, letztere, von denen es in jedem Dorfe zwei bis drei gibt, verfertigen Dolchklingen, Sicheln, Pferdegebisse, Hufeisen u. ä. an. Bei den Abchasen gilt ihr Beruf als besonders ehrenvoll und geachtet (s. S. 769, vgl. Afrika).

Der Warenverkehr beruhte früher ausschließlich auf Tausch. Die Tscherkessen verhandelten vor dem Eindringen der Russen (Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts) an die Ossen u. a. Salz, das sie auf großen, mit sechs bis acht Ochsen bespannten, zweirädrigen Wagen von den Salzseen am Kaspischen Meere zwischen Terek und Kuma holten. Von Erzeugnissen ihrer Wirtschaft verkauften sie hauptsächlich Wachs, Honig, Felle, Gewebe, Wettermäntel u. dgl. sowie Sklaven. Als Wertmesser für alle Waren diente Leinenzeug in Stücken von der Größe eines Hemdes.

Damals lagen die Männer, wenn sie nicht Krieg führten, vorzugsweise der Jagd und der Räuberei ob. Dabei pflegten sie, um von anderen Menschen nicht verstanden zu werden, und auch um das Wild zu täuschen, zwei Arten von Geheimsprachen zu gebrauchen; die Wörter der einen (šakobže) sind von der tscherkessischen ganz verschieden, bei den anderen (faršipse) wird nach jeder Silbe ein ri oder fe eingeschoben.

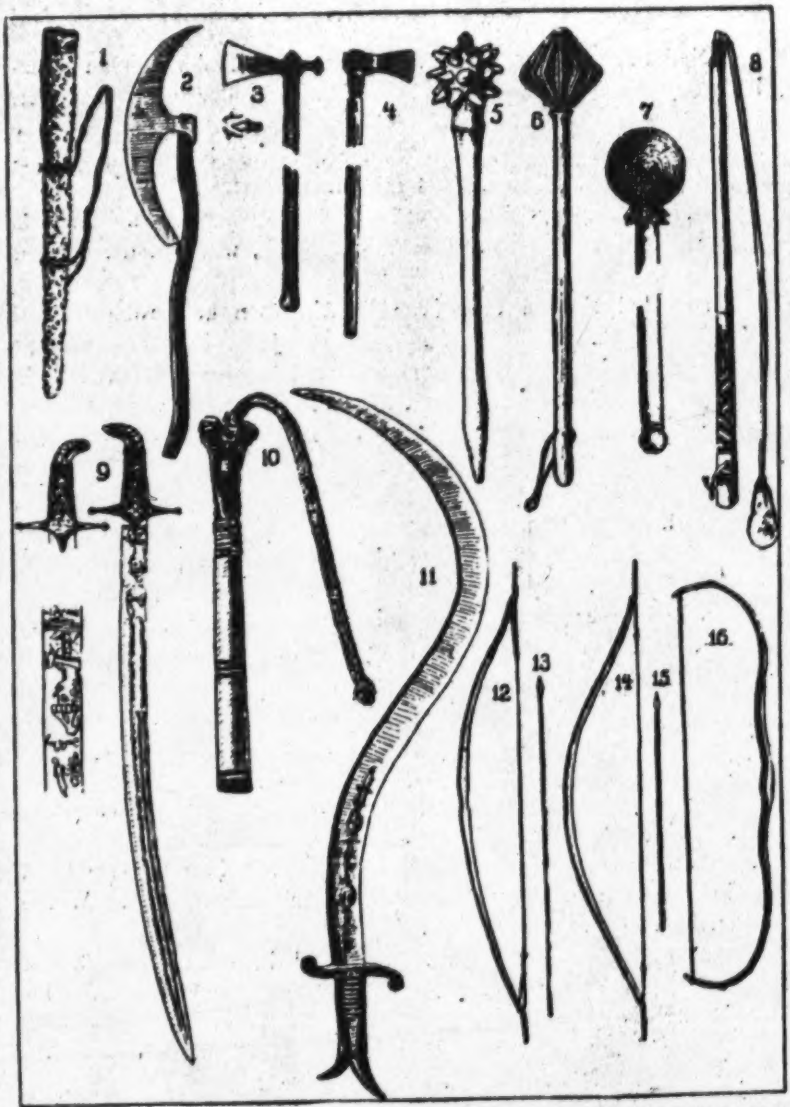


Abb. 451. Kaukasische Waffen: 1 Gewehrfutteral aus schwarzem Filz mit Lederbesatz; 2, 3, 4 Streitäxte mit eiserner Klinge und hölzernem Stiel; 5, 6, 7 Keulen mit Eisenköpfen; 8 Kante mit silberbeschlagenem Stiel; 9 Schwert mit georgischer Inschrift; 10 Kante mit geflochtenem Lederstrang; 11 Säbel (angeblich armenisch); 12, 14 Bogen mit Sehne aus gedrehter Hanfschnur; 13, 15 Pfeile mit Eisenspitze; 16 Bogen aus Horn und Knochen (türkischer Art) (1 1/10, 2 bis 4 1/10, 5 bis 10 1/7, 9 1/5, 12, 14, 16 1/10, 13, 15 1/10 n. Gr.)
(Nach Graf J. Zichy)

[p. 759]

Nahrung. Die täglichen Gerichte der Abchasen sind Maisbrei (abysta), den man mit Käsestreifen statt der Löffel verzehrt, saure Milch, Hirse mit Käse (ašladă) oder mit Milch und Käse (atšamuchkua) zubereitet. Im Winter essen sie öfters Fleisch, besonders das von Ziegen. Als Gewürze dienen wie überall roter Pfeffer, Knoblauch, bittere Kräuter. Für Festtage kochen die Frauen kegelförmige Brote (arvaša) in Milch, während der Fasten in Wasser.

Die Tscherkessen essen wie die Abchasen gern rohe Gurken mit Butter, Salz und rotem Pfeffer, gekochte junge Kürbisse, Möhren, wilden Spargel, Löwenzahn und andere Kräuter; auch viel Reis und dicken, steifen Brei (pasta), aus Weizenkörnern ohne Salz gekocht; früher wurde er mehr aus Hirse mit Hülsen (pasta) oder aus enthülster Hirse (hatlama) bereitet. Aus gemahlener Hirse buk man auch Fladenbrot (medžaga). Fleisch von Schafen und Rindern wird vielfach mit einer Tunke von saurer Milch und zerriebenem Knoblauch (tusluk) oder von Honig und Butter (fau'tgo) verzehrt. Saure Milch (škau), Quark und Käse ergänzen die tägliche Nahrung. Festspeisen sind: Spelznudeln mit zerschnittenen harten Eiern, Quark, saurer Milch, etwas Butter, Zwiebeln und Knoblauch (chinkal); in Butter gesottene Fladen aus Weizenmehl, Eiern und Milch (širaldama); kleine, mit Quark und Zwiebeln oder mit Honig gefüllte Kuchen aus gleichem Teige (haliva), getrocknete Äpfel, in Wein und Honig eingekochte Aprikosen und andere Früchte u. a.

Festgetränke sind: Schnaps (arka, fada fitsa = schwarzes F.), Meth (fada pliš = rote F.), Hirsebier (fada chuš = weiße F.), Honigwasser (fau'uš), gekochter Most mit Zusatz von Honig, Rosinen und Brombeersaft, Bier (šür), leichte und schwere Weine von wilden und zahmen Reben.

Gesellschaft und Familie. Wie bei anderen Bergvölkern (s. S. 732), so leiten auch bei den Abchasen der Hausvater (awn aihab) und die Hausmutter (awn aihab ap's) die Angelegenheiten der Sippe und vollziehen die Kulthandlungen. Eine eigenartige Sitte besteht bei ihnen: ein Erwachsener kann in eine andere Sippe gleichsam als Kind aufgenommen werden, wenn er der Hausmutter dreimal die Brust geküßt hat.

Bei den Tscherkessen waren bis 1866 ähnliche Stände vorhanden wie bei den Ossen: Fürsten (pši), Edelleute (work), die jenen im Kriege Gefolgschaft leisteten; von den Fürsten und Edelleuten freigelassene und dadurch

selbst wieder Edle gewordene und Leibeigene (tše'kötl). Diese letzteren waren entweder Bauern und durften nicht einzeln verkauft werden, oder sie waren Diener und wurden zuweilen freigelassen (begaulia). Die Bauern hatten für die Bedürfnisse und Verpflichtungen der Edlen und diese für die der Fürsten aufzukommen, erhielten aber ihrerseits von diesen Geschenke. In Streitfällen und bei wichtigen Anlässen berieten Fürsten, Edelleute und angesehene Bauern gemeinsam. In der Kabarda war dieses Feudalwesen am besten ausgebildet, und die Kabardiner waren in bezug auf Lebensart, Reitkunst, Kleidung, Waffen die Lehrmeister der Nachbarvölker. Bei den Tscherkessen herrschte ein ausgeprägter Adelsstolz, ihre Edelleute schätzten sich so hoch ein wie die Fürsten der Abchasen u. a. Deshalb wurde bei Heirat auf Ebenbürtigkeit der größte Wert gelegt; Söhne der Fürsten von leibeigenen Mädchen konnten nur durch Eheschließung mit Fürstinnen zu Fürsten, jedoch dritten Grades werden.

Von den Leibeigenen und Sklaven verkauften die Tscherkessen auch viele nach der Türkei, wo die Tscherkessinnen wegen ihrer Schönheit gesucht waren; niemals waren es jedoch Töchter von Fürsten oder Edelleuten, die stets nur durch Heirat und Brautgeld von Ebenbürtigen zu gewinnen waren, sondern außer eigenen Sklavinnen verhandelten sie Abchasinnen und Gefangene von den Kosaken und von feindlichen Völkern. Sklaven konnten die Freiheit durch Heirat mit einer Tscherkessin oder durch Annahme an Kindesstatt erlangen; diese wurde dadurch vollzogen, daß der Sklave, wie oben erwähnt, an der Brust der betreffenden Ehefrau in Gegenwart des Sippenältesten saugte (vgl. S. 807).

Ehe. Bei den Abchasen pflegten noch vor fünfzig Jahren die jungen Männer ein ebenbürtiges Mädchen, das sie zur Frau begehrten, in Begleitung von Freunden zu rauben. Heute geschieht die Entführung im Einverständnis mit dem Mädchen oder deren Eltern, gewöhnlich aber wirbt der Freier durch Vermittler (dade) oder Freiwerberinnen und zahlt, abgesehen von gegenseitigen Geschenken, einen Kaufpreis. Eine Zurückweisung des Antrages hat Entführung oder Verfeindung der Sippen zur Folge.

Nach dem Verlobungsschmaus bleibt der Bräutigam drei Tage im Hause der Braut oder in der Nähe, darf aber nicht mit deren Angehörigen zusammen essen und nicht sein Gesicht zeigen, das er mit der Kapuze seines Mantels verhüllt. Die Braut weilt nun einige Zeit in einer besonderen Hütte (amhara), worauf ein Schmaus veranstaltet und sie vom Hausvater gesegnet wird; dasselbe wird dem Bräutigam bei der Rückkehr in das Haus seines Vaters zuteil (ap'chaŝarche = Entfernung der Scham). Die Bräuche bei der Hochzeit, die nach Vollendung der Aussteuer stattfindet, sind fast die gleichen wie bei den Ossen (s. S. 808). Die junge Frau wohnt danach weiter in der erwähnten kleinen Hütte und darf mit niemand sprechen. Die Eltern des Mannes dürfen die jungen Eheleute mehrere Jahre lang nicht zusammen besuchen, niemals beide gemeinsam mit ihnen essen. Der Mann darf den Namen seiner Frau, diese den ihres Mannes und die seiner Verwandten nie anderen gegenüber aussprechen.

Auch bei den Tscherkessen kommt Mädchenraub nur noch selten vor, die Braut wird für Geld und Vieh erworben. Die Männer heiraten im fünfzehnten bis fünfundzwanzigsten, Mädchen zwischen zwölf und sechzehn Jahren. Bei der Freite (nakech) vollzieht der Priester (mollah) wie bei den mohammedanischen Abchasen nach Abschluß des Kaufes den Ehevertrag, wobei er die Hände der Vertreter der Brautleute zusammenlegt. Etwa zwei Monate danach wird der Kaufpreis übergeben, und bald darauf finden die zwei bis drei Wochen dauernden Hochzeitsfeierlichkeiten statt, mit denen einige eigenartige Bräuche verknüpft sind, die sich in der Kabarda am besten erhalten haben.

So hängt mit früherem Raub und Verteidigung durch die Sippe der Brauch zusammen, daß nach Ankunft der Braut ihre berittenen Begleiter sich mit ihren Knuten gegen die Burschen wehren, die vor dem Hause stehen und sie mit Stangen vom Pferd stoßen wollen, bis es ihnen gelingt, über den Zaun zu springen und ins Haus einzudringen.

Der Bräutigam wird für die Hochzeitstage als „Pflegesohn" (kan) von einer anderen Sippe aufgenommen und ihm daraus ein Begleiter (šatso-kot) seines Alters beigegeben, der für ihn sorgt, ihn verbirgt, da er bis zur „Versöhnung" (s. u.) nicht von älteren Männern angetroffen werden darf, der nachts in seiner Nähe wacht und tagsüber mit ihm auf den Bergweiden umherreitet; hier schenkt er ihm Vieh (šaga = zum Braten), das er seinen Angehörigen und seinen „Pflegeeltern" gibt. Am Hochzeitstage bringt der Begleiter ihn um Mitternacht zur Braut, die jenem gegenüber gleichwie vor einem Bruder keine Scheu zeigt; diese wird dann von der Brautschwester allein gelassen, und der Begleiter bleibt als Wächter bis zum Morgen in ihrer Nähe.

In der ersten Nacht kleidet der junge Mann seine Braut aus, nimmt ihr Schleier, Kopfputz, Oberkleider, Schuhe und vor allem das enge, rotlederne Leibchen ab, das er nicht aufschneiden, sondern dessen Verschnürung an der Vorderseite er sorgfältig aufknüpfen muß; er schenkt es am Morgen dem Begleiter und dieser es wieder einer seiner Schwestern. Auch in der zweiten und dritten Nacht zieht er seine Frau noch aus; erst in der vierten Nacht entkleidet diese umgekehrt ihren Mann und darf, was ihr vorher nicht erlaubt war, nun mit ihm sprechen.

Eine Woche danach erfolgt die „Einführung" (unaiše) der Frau in das Sippenhaus durch die anderen Frauen; böse Geister werden dabei durch Schießen und Schreien abgewehrt, und die Frau selbst ist verhüllt und geht auf Stelzschuhen. Über das Fell eines frisch geschlachteten Schafes schreitet sie ins Haus, wo sie ohne Verhüllung an die Wand gestellt und ihr eine süße Speise aus

Schaffett oder Butter und Honig (urtsetl) in den Mund gesteckt wird, damit ihr das neue Leben süß werde (vgl. S. 808).

Einige Tage später bei der „Versöhnung" des Mannes stellen sich abends die Eltern, die jungen Mädchen und die älteren Männer voneinander gesondert in seinem Hause auf. Ein Greis ruft ihn, nachdem er von seinen Freunden aus seinem Versteck vor die Türe geleitet worden war, reicht ihm eine Schale mit Honig gesüßten Bieres, wobei er ihm sagt, daß er sich nicht zu verbergen brauche, daß er kein Unrecht getan, sondern ihnen Freude bereitet habe und sich deshalb versöhnen solle. Seine Freunde schmausen dann und trinken Bier, und am zweitfolgenden Tag verzehren die Frauen und Mädchen gebratene und gekochte Hühner, die die Burschen tags zuvor in den einzelnen Gehöften eingesammelt hatten.

Nach zwei Tagen feiern die Burschen das „Drehen der Schüssel" (kinak-gagerŏa): einige von ihnen stellen sich jeweils um eine mit Bier gefüllte Schale; diese wird herumgedreht, und der Bursche, auf den beim Stillstehen der Griff der Schale zeigt, muß sie leeren. Am selben Abend endlich tanzen die alten Männer bei den jungen Eheleuten, wobei ein Geiger (phinate) aufspielt, und einige junge Mädchen und Burschen bedienen; ein fahrender Spielmann (gegwake) trägt unter Begleitung der zweisaitigen Geige (s. S. 779) Glückwunschgesänge und Scherzlieder vor.

Vielweiberei ist bei den mohammedanischen Abchasen und Tscherkessen zulässig — bei diesen war sie es auch im sechzehnten Jahrhundert, als sie noch Christen waren —, doch haben sie fast alle nur eine Frau. Sie wohnt zwar in einem Teile des Hauses für sich, wo sie der Mann nachts heimlich aufsucht, doch ist sie freier und geachteter als sonst im Morgenland (vgl. S. 709 und 732). Ihre Anwesenheit verhindert Totschlag und Blutrache, und der Verfolgte findet bei ihr Schutz (s. S. 771).

Der Tscherkesse kann sich von seiner Frau im Beisein von Zeugen lossagen und wieder heiraten, wenn er ihren Eltern den Kaufpreis beläßt. Wenn er sie nur zurückgeschickt und binnen zwei Jahren nicht wiedergeholt hat, gehen ihr Vater oder einer ihrer Angehörigen zu ihm, um sich über die Scheidung zu einigen; darauf darf auch die Frau wieder heiraten.

Beging eine Tscherkessin Ehebruch, so ließ ihr in früherer Zeit der Mann das Haar abscheren, schnitt ihr die Ärmel ab, kerbte ihr die Ohren ein und schickte sie zu Pferd zu ihrem Vater zurück, der sie verkaufte oder umbrachte. Dasselbe Schicksal erlitt die Braut, wenn sie vom Mann nicht als Jungfrau befunden ward; er erhielt dann das Kaufgeld zurück.

Kindererziehung. Die abchasischen und tscherkessischen Edelleute und Fürsten erziehen ihre Kinder nicht selbst. Jene ver-

trauten sie früher in ihrem dritten oder vierten Jahre einem anderen Edelmann oder einem Bauern an, der nichts für seine Mühe erhielt als nur den besten Teil der Beute, die sein Zögling, wenn er herangewachsen war, heimbrachte.

Fürstliche Tscherkessenkinder werden bald nach der Geburt, vor der sich der Vater auf einige Tage vom Hause entfernt, einer Pflegerin (anadzdzej) und einem Pflegevater (abadzdzej) samt Wiege, Wäsche, Kleidern, Waschkessel, einem Büffel, Kuh u. a. übergeben. Nach zwei bis drei Jahren bringen sie ihren Pflegling (achup'a) zusammen mit Geschenken an Vieh und Nahrungsmitteln den Eltern, die sie ehren und ihrerseits reich beschenken. Nach erlangter Volljährigkeit gibt ihn der Pflegevater seinen Eltern zurück, die diesen mit Vieh, Waffen und Geld beschenken und gleich wie einen nahen Verwandten in Ehren halten. Stirbt der Pflegling vorher, bestattet er ihn, wie es die Sitte gebietet, hält die Gedächtnisfeiern, bringt Opfer usw.; verwaist sein Zögling, kauft er ihm auch eine Braut oder veranlaßt ihn, sich eine zu rauben.

Die Erziehung bezweckt, dem Knaben Lebensart, Ausdauer, Mut, Tapferkeit, Gewandtheit im Reiten, Fechten, Schießen, früher auch die Handhabung des Bogens und Geschick beim Rauben beizubringen. Der Zögling seinerseits muß seinen Pflegeeltern beistehen, Verlorenes suchen, sie gegen Raub und Beleidigung schützen, nötigenfalls mit Hilfe seiner eigenen Eltern. Stirbt der Pflegevater oder die Pflegemutter oder ein Kind von ihnen, so beschafft er den Sarg, leitet die Bestattungs- und Gedenkfeiern und hält die Trauervorschriften ein. Die Söhne des Pflegevaters sind seine ergebenen Freunde; heiratet einer, gibt er der Braut reiche Geschenke, oder wenn jener ein Mädchen geraubt hat, nimmt er es unter seine Obhut, und niemand wird sich an ihm als Fürstensohn darum vergreifen.

Adelige Mädchen werden ebenfalls Zieheltern übergeben, die sie in den weiblichen Handfertigkeiten unterrichten, zu Sittsamkeit, Gehorsam und ähnlichem anhalten. Im siebenten oder zehnten Jahre wird ihnen das lederne Schnürleibchen angelegt (s. o. S. 762).

Die Kinder von Christen werden zuweilen getauft und ihnen ein christlicher Name gegeben, aber als Rufname ist wie bei den Ossen der bei der Geburt gewählte einheimische üblich — bei den Mohammedanern auch viele tatarische, bzw. arabische. Solche sind z. B. Goinuqua (= Fellsohn), Keltäuqua (= Wollensohn), Koituqua

(= umgekehrter Sohn), Meiremaqua (= Freitagssohn), T'a'ašine (= Gotteslamm), T'agelak (= Gottesfurcht), 'Adzug (= junger Hund), Togdžuqua (= Sohn eines Fetten); Temir (= Eisen), Petak (= Zweig), Košbaš (= Doppelkopf) und ähnliche. Weibliche: Džennet (= Seligkeit), Devlet-chan, Tatema, Kistaman, Tepsike, Gošop'o churaja (= runde Fürstentochter) usw.

Tod. Wenn in Abchasien jemand vom Blitz erschlagen ist, wird er in einen Sarg gelegt und dieser an einem Baum aufgehängt (wie im alten Lasistan, s. o. S. 671, in Sibirien u. a. O.), bis die Leiche vollständig verwest ist; die Knochen werden dann begraben.

Im sechzehnten Jahrhundert pflegten die Tscherkessen die Leiche eines Edelmanns, nachdem sie die Eingeweide herausgenommen hatten, eine Woche lang, auf einem hohen hölzernen Bettgestell sitzend, auf dem Felde auszustellen. Daneben standen die beiden nächsten Angehörigen und auf dem Bett ein Mädchen, das mit einem auf einen Pfeil gesteckten Seidentuche die Fliegen abwehrte, während die erste seiner Frauen zu seinen Häupten saß, ohne zu weinen. Danach wurde die Leiche mit Kleidern und Waffen in einem gespaltenen und ausgehöhlten Baumstamme zusammen mit einem Teile der Geschenke: silbernen Schalen, Bogen, Pfeilen u. a., die Verwandten, Freunde und Leibeigene gebracht hatten, gelegt und am Begräbnisort auf die Erde gesetzt; darüber wurde ein Hügel gewölbt, der um so höher war, je mehr Ansehen der Verstorbene genossen hatte. Als Totenopfer brachte man dabei die Unschuld eines Mädchens von zwölf bis vierzehn Jahren dar, die ihr, auf einer Ochsenhaut liegend, die Burschen mit Gewalt zu nehmen suchten. Nach der Bestattung führte ein Diener an mehreren Tagen das aufgezäumte Roß des Toten zum Grabe und rief ihn dreimal zum Essen.

Jetzt setzt man Verstorbene unter Mitwirkung eines christlichen, bzw. mohammedanischen Geistlichen (mullah) bei. Die Totenklage am Sarge und bei den Kleidern und Waffen des Verstorbenen, der Leichenschmaus u. a. gleichen den chewsurischen (s. S. 737f.); nur knien hier am Sarge auch Klagemänner. Während die Leiche zum Grabe getragen wird, wirft man ein Seil über das Dach und zieht es hin und her, um zu prüfen, ob das Haus, das durch den Weggang des Verstorbenen erschüttert ist, noch standhält (so auch in Mingrelien). Ins Grab warfen die Tscherkessen früher das rechte Ohr seines Pferdes, nachdem sie zuvor dem Toten die Zügel in die Hand gegeben und es dreimal ums Grab geführt hatten (vgl. S. 811). Die Mutter, die Frau und die Pflegerin trauern vierzig Tage hindurch morgens und abends am Grabe, und ebenso lange oder auch während eines ganzen Jahres stellt man bei den Mahlzeiten Speisen

für den Verstorbenen auf den Tisch. Am vierzigsten Tage findet die erste, im zweiten Jahre, gewöhnlich im Herbst, die zweite Gedächtnisfeier statt. Am Vorabend dieser letzteren (ap'a-chuvra = Zuteilung an die Seele) stellt man die Kleider und das Pferd mit dem Sattel und den Waffen des Verstorbenen aus, trauert im Hause und am Grabe und schlachtet Opfertiere. Ein Zug von Dorfgenossen in Trauerkleidern und barfuß bringt Vieh und Nahrungsmittel herbei; unter ihnen tragen ein Mann auf einem astförmigen Leuchter und die Ochsen auf den Hörnern brennende Kerzen. Am Tage darauf wird auf einem Felde das Roß des Toten dreimal im Kreise herumgeführt, und ihm folgen die Angehörigen in Trauerkleidung und wehklagend; danach ist die Seele des Toten, die bis dahin noch zeitweilig unsichtbar bei ihnen weilte, endgültig von der Erde verschwunden. Nach dem Gedächtnisschmaus halten die Burschen und Männer Redeübungen, Preisschießen und Wettrennen ab wie bei den Chewsuren (s. S. 738 und unten S. 773).

Die Begräbnisplätze, welche die Gräber je einer Sippe umfassen, liegen meist auf Erhöhungen und sind eingezäunt. Über den mit Brettern ausgeschlagenen Gräbern werden — abweichend von der sonstigen Bauweise — Häuschen aus Bohlen und mit Schindeldächern errichtet und Obstbäume daneben gepflanzt.

Auch bei den Abchasen herrscht der Glaube, daß die Seelen der Toten dieselben Bedürfnisse haben wie die Lebenden, deshalb baut man solche Grabhäuser, legt Melonen- und Gurkenschnitte auf die Gräber, stellt ein Jahr lang nach dem Tode bei den Mahlzeiten Speisen mit für sie auf den Tisch. Beim zweiten Gedächtnisfest legt der Hausvater einen mit Wein übergossenen Hirsekloß und Stücke vom Herzen und von der Leber des Opfertieres auf den Hof. Wenn die Seelen vernachlässigt werden, kommen sie nachts ans Haus und pfeifen, dann gibt man ihnen Speisen und Wein hinaus. Wenn die Seelen, die „Äußeren", erzürnt sind, verursachen sie bei Vieh und Menschen Schwäche und Krankheit. Dann sucht man durch Gebet und Opfer von Fleisch und saurer Milch, die auf ein Tuch unter einem Schutzdach und daneben Kleider, bei weiblichen Seelen auch Schmucksachen gelegt werden, die Toten (angip'angis) zu versöhnen und erbittet von ihnen für den danebenstehenden Kranken Heilung, wobei man ihm zur „Befreiung" (azati) über den Rücken streicht.

Wenn einer ertrunken und seine Leiche bestattet ist, meint man, daß seine Seele im Wasser geblieben sei und herausgeholt werden müsse. Dazu hängt man einen ledernen Quersack an einer Seidenschnur über den betreffenden Fluß, und am Ufer stehen Männer und Frauen, singen und spielen Harfe, um die Seele in den Sack zu locken. Sobald die Seele hineingeschlüpft ist, springt ein Mann ins Wasser und bindet den Sack zu; dann bringt er ihn zum Grabe und läßt die Seele durch ein Loch zu ihrem Körper hinein.

Glaubensanschauungen und -bräuche. Das Christentum soll nach der georgischen Chronik Wachtangs V. schon 40 n. Chr. nach Abchasien gebracht worden sein, fand aber offenbar keinen günstigen Boden, denn erst zur Zeit der byzantinischen Besetzung der Küstenstädte wird von erfolgreicher Ausbreitung berichtet. Kaiser Justinian ließ eine große Kirche zu Bitschwinta (Pitzunda) errichten, wo dann auch der abchasische Katholikos und der georgische Statthalter ihren Sitz hatten. Durch die Tataren wurden Ende des siebzehnten Jahrhunderts die meisten Abchasen zur Annahme des Islams veranlaßt, und nur die Samurzakaner blieben dem Christentum treu, aber die zahlreichen Ruinen von Kirchen und Klöstern gelten ihnen als heilige Orte, wohin sie wallfahrten, und bei denen sie schwören. Auch einige Bräuche dürften christlichen Ursprungs sein: Verwendung von Wachskerzen und Weihrauch, bunte Ostereier, Ehrfurcht vor dem Kreuzzeichen, Fasten, Essen von Schweinefleisch u. dgl. Die Tscherkessen, in deren Lande wenige Kirchenreste zu finden sind, vertauschten das Christentum später als die Abchasen mit dem Islam; die Kabardiner traten gegen Mitte und die übrigen unter türkischer Einwirkung gegen Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts dazu über. Jedoch haben beide Religionen ebensowenig wie bei den Gebirgsgeorgiern tiefgehenden Einfluß ausgeübt, die alteinheimischen Anschauungen und Gebräuche sind nie aufgegeben worden.

Die Götterwelt der Abchasen hat große Ähnlichkeit mit der der Ossen (s. S. 815f.). Ein oberster Gott (Anzar ma) ist Herr über Gutes und Böses. Die Hämmerer (Ašatsatšap'atsa) entscheiden über das Schicksal Neugeborener und schreiben es ihm auf die Stirn (lachintsara). Von Naturgöttern verehren sie die Schutzherren des Viehes (Alt'ar), der Ziegen (Džabran), des Jagdwildes (Ažvepša), der Erde (Adabna), des Regenbogens (Atsakwa); die Herrin des Wassers (Dzlan dzahwas'), des Windes (P'šarn'a), der Saaten (Dz'adz'a und Anap'anga), der Hunde (Ališkantra), der Bienen (Ananagund) u. a. Ebenso wie die Ossen kennen sie einen Schutzherrn der Räuber (Eirig-ätsnych oder Tšuguruchnych) und einen der Schmiede (Šjošu). Letztere, die sehr häufig angerufen werden, dürften manistischer Art, aus dem Seelenglauben entsprossen sein, wie auch der Schutzgeist des Herdes (Aša'ara), die Muttergöttin (Anana'a) und die „Äußeren" (adnqa) (s. S. 766). Dem Gott des Donners (vgl. S. 816) schreiben die Abchasen ähnliche Macht und Tätigkeit zu wie die Ossen dem heiligen Elias, aber er wird teilweise mit dem nicht erfaßbaren höchsten Gott (s. S. 795) verquickt und mit dessen Fähigkeiten ausgestattet; so auch in der Gestalt des lokalen obersten Gottes (Anyba-nycha-dudrüp'ä), als dessen Sitz der Berg Dudrüpsch bei Lychny gilt. — Dem Gott des Wildes (Ažvepša) opfern die Jäger vor der Jagd, die nach der Weinlese beginnt und

bis gegen Neujahr dauert, einen Ziegenbock oder einen Hammel, damit er ihnen aus seiner Herde erwünschte Beute gewähre. Er gibt ihnen aber nur die Tiere, die er und seine Töchter schon einmal verzehrt haben, und die er wieder lebendig gemacht hatte, indem er nach dem Essen ihre Knochen in ihr Fell wickelte. Weiße Tiere sind Aǯvepšas Hirten und dürfen deshalb nicht erlegt werden.

Bösartige Seelen reißen, ähnlich den westeuropäischen Vampiren, Augen, Herz und Leber u. dgl. aus dem Leib, saugen den Kühen die Milch aus. Sie sind verschieden mächtig und reiten je nachdem auf Fröschen, Mäusen, Katzen oder auf Füchsen und Wölfen. Ihr Häuptling (Roskipi) wohnt auf dem Berge Tabakona, wo sie jährlich zu Mariä Himmelfahrt Rechenschaft ablegen und die geraubten Körperteile vorzeigen müssen. Deshalb stellen die Abchasen in den Fasten Kreuze auf, tragen Lichter auf dem Kopfe, und in der Nacht zuvor wachen, schießen und singen sie. Die bösen Seelen können gleichzeitig unter den Menschen und auf dem Berge Tabakona weilen, da nur ihre Nebenseele (ap'stšada) umherwandert.

Neben ihren alten Göttern verehren die Abchasen Christus als heiligen Lehrer, Maria und den heiligen Georg als Schützer der Dörfer Lychny (Anan-Lychnych), Lsá oder Pitzunda (Ana-Lsánych) und Jlori (Tsminda-Giorgi), denen alljährlich ein Schaf geopfert und den Kirchen ein Kalb mit eingekerbtem Ohre gewidmet wird.

Die Tscherkessen hatten wie die Gebirgsgeorgier heilige Haine und Bäume, wo früher die Volksversammlungen abgehalten, wo Räuber Zuflucht fanden, und wo Jagd- und Kriegsbeute und Opfergaben aufgehängt wurden. Auch einzelne Quellen und Berge, gewisse Steinsäulen (vgl. S. 796) und eiserne und steinerne Kreuze sollen als heilig gegolten haben.

Die priesterlichen Verrichtungen werden von auserwählten älteren Männern vorgenommen; sie sind Vorbeter und schlachten in den heiligen Hainen vor dem Kreuz die Opfertiere: Schafe, Lämmer, Ziegen, Ochsen, nachdem sie diese vorher mit einer Kienfackel am Halse gesengt und mit Hirsebier überschüttet haben (vgl. unten bei Abschnitt III, 1b: Tscheremissen). Der Kopf des Tieres wird an einem Baum für den Gott aufgehängt, die Haut erhält der Priester, das Fleisch wird von den Gläubigen verzehrt, die sich an den Festtagen mit Schmausen, Tanzen, Trinken, Wettrennen, Kampfspielen u. a. vergnügen.

Die Gottheiten der Tscherkessen sind fast dieselben wie die der Abchasen; sie kennen ein höchstes Wesen (T'ka), das über dem Himmel waltet; einen Gott der Schmiede (Tlibsbe), die Schützer des Ackerbaues (Jemicha, Shus'cha, Naochatcha,); den Schutzherrn der Wälder (Mezitch, Mezetcha), der auf einem Eber mit goldenen Borsten reitet, und dessen Töchter die Hirschkühe melken; den Herrn der Bienen (Merissa oder Mereime); drei Schwestern, welche das häusliche Leben, die Krieger im Kampf, den Reisenden unterwegs beschirmen; den Gott der Winde und Gewässer (Seozeres) u. a.

Zu Ehren des letzteren findet am Anfang des Frühlings ein dreitägiges Fest statt, bei dem ein trockener Birnbaum, mit Blumengewinden und anderem Schmuck behängt und mit einem Käse an der Spitze, von Lampen beleuchtet, im Hause eines Sippenältesten aufgestellt wird. Ein Tier wird zu Ehren des Gottes geopfert, und nach Schluß des Festmahles wird der Käse an die Teilnehmer als Krankheitszauber verteilt. Andere Feste werden zu Neujahr gefeiert, zu Ostern, im März, wo man zuerst fastet, dann im heiligen Haine Opfer schlachtet, sich mit Schießen nach Eiern u. a. belustigt; zu Beginn der Ernte, wo gerösteter unreifer Weizen mit Sauermilch, später andere Getreidearten und Früchte als Festspeisen verzehrt werden; im Oktober beim Absterben der Pflanzen usw.

Den Göttern und Seelen bezeugen die Abchasen ihre Verehrung bei gegebener Veranlassung oder an bestimmten Festtagen durch Opfer von Tieren, Milch, Brot u. a. und durch Gebete, die oft wortreich und dichterisch erhaben geformt sind.

So kniet man am Neujahrsvorabend im Gebet und Weihrauch aufs Kohlenbecken streuend um einen viereckigen Käsekuchen (suluguni) — dieser Brauch heißt Kalinda, vgl. die Kolinda der Rumänen u. a., — und am Neujahrstag legt der Hausvater jedem ein Weizenbrot mit einem darin eingebackenen Ei auf die Brust, wobei er an Gott das „Herzgebet" (gunychwa) richtet, damit sie vor Herzkrankheiten bewahrt bleiben. Am Weihnachtstag zwischen dem ersten Hahnenschrei und der Morgendämmerung bittet er, daß sie von Zerrüttung des Magens verschont werden; danach ißt jeder ein Huhn und je vier kleine Käsebrote (kwakwari). Am Neujahrsvorabend wird auch das Fest des Ajoła gefeiert, besonders seitens der Schmiede. Dabei betet der Hausvater zu ihm um Gesundheit und Bewahrung vor Schaden durch die Werkzeuge und wirft ins Feuer Stücke von Quarkkuchen und von den Herzen und Lebern der Opfertiere: einem Schaf oder Kalb für den Hausvater, einem Hahn für jedes Mitglied der Familie.

Zu Ehren des Gottes des Blitzes (Apʼi, shachikai = der oben Wohnende, von den Tscherkessen Šible genannt), opfern die Hirten vor dem Auftrieb ins Gebirge und nach dem Abtrieb von da Hammel und beten, daß er sie und ihre Herden verschonen möge. Wenn ein Tier vom Blitz getötet ist, ruft

der Besitzer alle Dorfbewohner herbei; sie legen das Tier unter Gesang und Tanz (atlar-tlouf) auf ein rasch errichtetes 8 m hohes Gerüst oder auf einen Baum. Der Eigner opfert einen Ochsen und betet um künftige Verschonung; dann verzehren sie das Fleisch der Opfertiere, Brot, Käse, trinken Wein und schmausen den ganzen Tag. Mit einem vom Blitz erschlagenen Menschen verfahren die Abchasen in gleicher Weise, dabei darf niemand weinen, sonst wird der Gott zornig (s. o. S. 816).

An Ap'i wendet man sich auch bei Dürre, damit er Regen sende; ein Ochse wird geopfert, und beim Schmaus singt man im Wechselgesang Dank- und Loblieder (antšwa-rysšwa). Um Regen herbeizurufen gebraucht man einen Zauber, ähnlich dem bei den Balkanvölkern üblichen (vgl. auch S. 797). Die Mädchen des von Dürre betroffenen Dorfes setzen eine Weiberpuppe, welche die Dürre verkörpert, auf einen Esel und führen ihn zum Flusse; hier setzen sie die Puppe auf ein aus Zweigen und Stroh gefertigtes Floß, zünden es an und lassen es treiben. Den Esel ziehen sie mit Gewalt durch das Wasser, und wenn er drüben schreit, wird es Regen geben.

Bei Krankheiten ruft man verschiedene Götter an. Schüttelfrost, Irrereden u. dgl. bei schwerer Erkrankung schreibt man der Anwesenheit des höchsten Gottes (Antsar ma) im Körper des Leidenden zu. Um ihn zu heilen singt und tanzt man um ihn und zwingt auch ihn dazu, dann opfert man in der Nähe des Hauses Brote und eine Ziege oder ein Schaf, wobei keine Frauen zugegen sein dürfen; ein Greis geht mit einer Kerze um den Kranken herum und bittet den Gott, jenem zu vergeben und ihn zu befreien. Auch zu Mikel-Gabriel betet er danach.

Bei Fieber hofft man, bei der „Mutter des Wassers" Hilfe zu finden; diese wohnt, wie man meint, in einem reinen See oder einer Quelle, ist schön, hat braunes Haar und lachende Augen und lebt gern wie die Nixen einige Zeit mit einem Mann. Eine alte Frau berührt mit einem dem Fieberkranken gehörigen Gegenstand das Wasser und bittet die Göttin, ihn zu lösen, wenn sie ihn gebunden habe. Dann schöpft sie einige Tropfen Wasser auf Erlenblätter, die sie im Hause über dem Herdfeuer anbringt, damit das Fieber ebenso schnell wie das Wasser auf den Blättern vergehe. Schließlich läuft die Alte weg mit dem Wunsche, daß auch das Fieber fortlaufen möge. Sobald der Kranke vermag, begibt er sich mit einer Betfrau zum Wasser, widmet dort kniend der Mutter des Wassers ein Huhn, ihrem Gatten einen Hahn und ihrer Dienerin (Abza'awabzatšaw = Wohltäterin, Fürsprecherin) wie auch den beiden anderen je ein Licht. Die Frau betet und streicht dem Kranken zur „Befreiung" (azati) über den Rücken.

Wenn einer an Gelbsucht oder Körperschwäche leidet, führen ihn die

„unbescholtenen" Alten zum Fluß, legen an beiden Ufern seine Kleider, Silberzeug u. a. nieder und machen aus Zwirnfäden eine Brücke über den Fluß; darauf geht die Betfrau mit einer Puppe um den Kranken herum und betet zum Regenbogen im Namen des Eliap'li, zur Mutter des Wassers und zu deren Gatten. Von den mitgebrachten Speisen: gebratenen Hühnern, zungenförmigen Fladenbroten u. a. wirft sie Stückchen als Opfer ins Wasser, und die Puppe läßt sie mit einer brennenden Kerze in einem Kürbis flußabwärts schwimmen, wobei sie wünscht, daß die Göttin sich damit statt mit dem Kranken vergnügen möge. Schließlich gibt sie diesem „Befreiung", und er darf sich auf dem Heimweg nicht umschauen (vgl. dazu S. 924 f.).

Wenn Rinderpest herrschte, gruben die Kemirkche in der steilen Uferwand eines Flusses einen Tunnel und in dessen Mitte eine Grube, in der sie eine schwarze Katze mit einem silbernen Gürtel festbanden. Die Grube bedeckten sie mit Brettern und Erde, zündeten auf ihr durch Reiben zweier Hölzer ein Feuer an und trieben, begleitet von den Bittgesängen der Priester, die Rinder durch den Fluß und den Tunnel. Danach ließ man die Katze laufen.

Fruchtbarkeit bezweckt das erwähnte dreifache Gebet am Wasser, wenn man eine junge Frau zum erstenmal „ans Wasser führt", wobei ein Ei hineingeworfen wird, und bei einer Wöchnerin Nahrung für den Säugling.

Vorzeichen für künftige Ereignisse, für günstigen oder üblen Ausgang von Unternehmungen ersehen die Abchasen aus den Sternen, aus der Gestalt des Mondes, aus dem Zusammentreffen mit bestimmten Tieren oder Menschen oder auch nach tatarischer Weise aus den Sprüngen eines Schafschulterblattes, das man ins Feuer geworfen hatte (s. Bd. II, S. 325).

Recht. Blutrache wird bei den Tscherkessen (t'li'lwaa = Blutpreis) und Abchasen noch jetzt geübt.

Wenn früher ein Fürst einen Bauern erschlug, durften dessen Angehörige sich nicht an jenem rächen, sondern an seinem Pflegevater (vgl. S. 764). Das Wergeld wurde je nach dem Stand mit „Seelen" und nach der Körpergröße mit Spannen bemessen; die Werteinheit war dabei eine Kuh (vgl. S. 747). Eine „Seele" von 4 Spannen war mit 30, von 5 Spannen mit 50, von 6 Spannen mit 70 Kühen zu büßen; ein Bauer wurde dabei mit 5, ein Edelmann mit 15, ein Fürst mit 25 Seelen berechnet. Das Wergeld bestand in Kühen, Ziegen, Schafen und Bienenkörben; bei nicht rechtzeitiger Zahlung erhöhte es sich um eine Spanne. War der Bluträcher zur Versöhnung geneigt, so besiegelte er sie durch Küssen der Brust der Mutter oder der Frau des Schuldigen (vgl. o. S. 760).

Diebstahl war bei den Tscherkessen ähnlich wie bei den Chewsuren zu sühnen. Der Dieb mußte einem Edelmann das Gestohlene zurückgeben und dreißig Ochsen dazu, einem Fürsten es neunfach ersetzen.

Bei der Teilung einer abchasischen Sippe erhalten der Hausvater und die Mutter die Hälfte des Gesamtbesitzes; ist der Vater schon verstorben, bekommt die Mutter die eingebrachte Mitgift und

von jedem Sohn einen gleichen Anteil. Der älteste Sohn hat bei der Teilung oder bei Erbschaft ein Vorrecht (aï'ab-šachu) und ebenso — wie bei den Ossen — der jüngste (eidzb-šachu); diesem fällt das Gehöft u. a. zu, der Rest wird unter die übrigen Kinder gleichmäßig verteilt, wobei die Töchter weniger als diese erhalten. Bei den Tscherkessen hatte der älteste Sohn für seine unverheirateten Schwestern zu sorgen; dafür erhielt er auch das Brautgeld (s. S. 761), wenn er sie verheiratete.

Ein eigenartiger Reinigungseid ist bei den Abchasen üblich; der Beschuldigte schlägt in der Schmiede mit dem Hammer dreimal auf den Amboß und sagt, daß der Gott der Schmiede ihm den Kopf zerschmettern möge, wenn er schuldig sei. Oder er geht

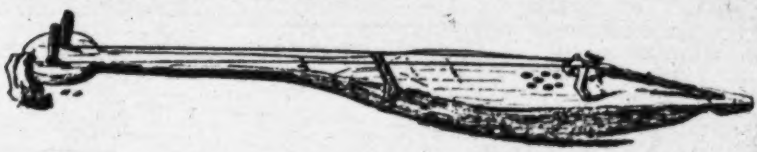


Abb. 452. Zupfgeige mit zwei Saiten, Abchasen (1/7 n. Gr.)
(Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

dreimal zwischen zwei geladenen Flinten hindurch und fordert den Gott auf, ihm in den Kopf zu schießen, wenn er lüge.

Kunst und Spiel. Die alten Überlieferungen von der Vergangenheit und von den Taten der Tscherkessen wurden von den fahrenden Sängern (gegwako) gehütet; sie sangen davon bei Festen und Schmäusen, während sie jetzt fast nur noch Glückwunsch-, Lob- und Scherzlieder dabei vortragen. Soweit bekannt, ist die Volksdichtung der Abchasen reich an religiösen und an Festgesängen und Gebetsformeln, vermutlich aber auch an Helden- u. a. Liedern. Zur Begleitung beim Singen benutzt man eine zwei- oder dreisaitige Zupfgeige (abchasisch ap'chirtsá, s. Abb. 452) oder die mingrelische Laute (atšangur), deren Griff zuweilen beschnitzt oder kopfartig ausgestaltet ist. Außerdem gebrauchen die Tscherkessen noch lange Flöten (tšebizga) aus Rohr oder Metall mit drei Fingerlöchern und dreieckige Harfen (pšine-duk-okjo), die auch bei den Swanen vorkommen; diese sind 20 bis 70 cm breit und haben 40 cm lange am Schallkörper und oben an Pflöcken befestigte Haarsaiten.

Der beliebteste Tanz bei den Abchasen ist der „Schultertanz", bei dem sich die jungen Leute an der Hand fassen, sich singend

2: Byhan RI3 Abkhaz

herumdrehen und von Zeit zu Zeit hochspringen. Bei den Tscherkessen gab es Tänze der Mädchen (denjola), die dabei auf der Stelle hüpften, mit Gesang verbundene Reigentänze von Männern und Mädchen (uk) und von einem einzelnen vollbewaffneten Manne ausgeführte wilde Kriegstänze (kofa).

Die Hauptvergnügungen der Männer sind Kraftspiele, Steinstoßen, Ballwerfen und ähnliches. Die Abchasen fochten früher, dabei gewöhnlich zu Pferde sitzend, Zweikämpfe mit dem Schwert aus, oder sie veranstalteten Speerkämpfe, bei denen sie, in zwei Haufen geteilt, gegeneinander anritten, sich mit langen weißen Stäben (džerid) bewarfen, diese im Flug auffingen oder vom Boden aufrafften (vgl. S. 715).

Zu Hochzeiten und Beerdigungen finden Preisschießen und Wettrennen statt. Die Abchasen schießen dabei mit Flinten nach einem auf einer hohen Stange angebrachten Ziel; die Tscherkessen verstehen es, ein ähnliches Ziel in vollem Galopp zu treffen. Bei Totengedächtnisfeiern (s. S. 738) sprengt ein Mann auf dem Pferde des Verstorbenen davon, und hinter ihm her jagen die übrigen und versuchen von dem schwarzen Tuch, womit es bedeckt ist, Stücke abzureißen. Daran schließt sich eine Art Stafettenreiten (tartšej): ein Bursche reitet mit einem Lappen, Schuh und ähnlichem voraus; wer es vermag, ihm diesen zu entreißen, wird dann seinerseits verfolgt, bis es endlich einem gelingt, damit den Ausgangspunkt wieder zu erreichen. Bei anderen Spielen heben die Reiter Mützen Geld und ähnliches im Vorbeigaloppieren von der Erde auf.

c) Die Tschetschenen und Lesghier

Das Gebiet der Tschetschenen umfaßt den bewaldeten Nordabhang des Gebirgszuges, der von der Hauptkette, vom Tebulos und Diklos her, nach Nordosten abzweigt und die Tschetschnja vom Daghestan scheidet, und das davorliegende Flachland bis zum Terek Ihre Nachbarn sind im Osten die Kymyken, im Norden Kosaken, im Westen Kabardiner und Ossen, im Süden Chewsuren, Thuschen und Lesghier. Der westliche Stamm, die Inguschen, sind zum Teil durch einen Streifen russischen Siedlungslandes zwischen Wladikawkas und Grosnyj abgetrennt und ebenso zwischen Grosnyj und Mosdok die Tschetschenen, welche 1866 am Terek angesiedelt wurden.

Die Lesghier bewohnen das fast waldlose kahle Daghestan

(= Bergland), welches sich südöstlich des obengenannten Bergzuges bis zum Baba-dagh nördlich von Schemacha erstreckt, d. i. die Flußgebiete des Samur, des Rubas und des oberen Sulak. Ihre Nachbarn sind im Osten in der kaspischen Küstenebene Aserbaidschaner Tataren und die Kymyken, im Nordwesten die Tschetschenen, im Westen die Thuschen, im Südwesten die kachischen Georgier, im Süden Aserbaidschaner Tataren und die Tat.

Abb. 453. Aware
(Nach Graf J. Zichy)

Über die Herkunft der beiden sprachlich — aber nicht kulturell — geschiedenen Völker melden die georgischen, persischen, armenischen und arabischen Schriftsteller nichts. Bekannt ist nur, daß seit Tschingischan mongolische und tatarische Heerscharen die Tschetschenen dauernd bedrängten und z. T. unterworfen hielten, bis deren Macht durch die Russen gebrochen wurde. Als Stammsitz aller Tschetschenen geben sie selbst Nachasché am oberen Argun an, von dem ihr Name Nachtschuj herkommt. Volkssagen erzählen von einem Mann aus dem hohen Kaukasus, von einem Araber u. a. als Stammvater. Man darf zwar annehmen, daß von den georgischen, kumanischen, chasarischen, armenischen u. a. Hilfscharen der tatarischen Chane manche im östlichen und nördlichen Kaukasien zurückblieben, zur Bildung solcher Sagen mag aber auch das Eindringen der Araber im Daghestan und in Itschkerien und das häufige Vorkommen des sogenannten semitischen, bzw. jüdischen Gesichtsschnittes (s. S. 661 u. 626 f.) beigetragen haben. Die lesghischen Dargwa von Akuscha und die Kasikumuchen z. B. wollen von Armeniern abstammen, die Dido von Georgiern, die Awaren von Syriern, die Andi von Juden. Arabische Aufzeichnungen, die sich in Chunsach und Kasikumuch fanden, erzählen, daß um das Jahr 800 Araber von Schirwan und Schemacha aus in den Daghestan (Džab-h'arbi) eingedrungen seien, die mit den Russen (Waringern?) verbündeten lesghischen Krieger vergiftet und überall Mohammedaner als Herren eingesetzt hätten, so in Kaitach einen Kureischiten (daher Kureiš-kalé genannt), in Tanus in Awarien jedoch merkwürdigerweise einen Russen. Das Daghestan zerfiel damals in drei Teile: Kaitach (arabisch Sarach-Karan), Awarien und das Flachland (saglun). Die kasikumuchischen Statthalter (šamchal oder wali) verlegten Ende des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts ihren Sitz nach Tarki bei Petrowsk im Kymyken-Land, deshalb

wählten die Kasikumuchen fünfzig Jahre später eigene Herzöge (shachlawtil), die im achtzehnten Jahrhundert sogar gegen die Perser siegreich kämpften.

Außer den S. 665 f. angeführten Stämmen unterscheidet man bei den Tschetschenen noch Karabulak (meist nach der Türkei ausgewandert) am Pseduch, am Mitschik und Gums die Mitschiko (daraus Mitšigyš bei den Kymyken für alle Tschetschenen, und bei den Dargwa für die Itschkerier Mitši-chidž = Bewohner von Hirseländereien); ferner Dscherach, Metzchal, Tzori, Chamchal, Nasran, Galasch als Gemeinschaften oder Geschlechter der Inguschen.

Abb. 454. Awarin
(Nach R. v. Erckert)

Die Tschetschenen sind meist hochgewachsen, kräftig, schlank; der Schädel ist kurz, das Gesicht breit bis oval, die Nase gerade und stark, die Farbe der Augen dunkel, die der Haare braun, jedoch kommen Blonde mit blauen und grauen Augen häufig vor. Im Norden bei den Mitschiko trifft man öfters tatarischen Gesichtsschnitt, im Osten bei Itschkeriern und Akki vorderasiatischen mit dicker und arabischen mit schmaler Adlernase. Was die Geistesveranlagung anbetrifft, sind die Tschetschenen und Lesghier aufgeweckt, ausdauernd, selbstbewußt, leicht erregbar; den Inguschen wird Grausamkeit, Rachsucht und Raubgier nachgesagt.

Auch die Lesghier sind kein einheitlicher Schlag; im Osten tritt der vorderasiatische Gesichtsschnitt mit dicker gebogener Nase, vorspringendem Kiefer, dünnem Schnurr- und zweiteiligem Kinnbart überwiegend auf. Die Küriner von Achty haben wie die Chewsuren lange, spitze Nasen mit ausgeschnittenen Nasenflügeln, kurzes Gesicht, vorspringendes Kinn, tiefliegende Augen mit dichten Brauen, sehr helle Gesichtsfarbe, schwarzes dichtes Haar. Das Hauptkennzeichen der Küriner ist sonst eine auffällige Schmalheit des Gesichts unterhalb der Nase; daneben kommen auch tatarische Merkmale vor. Im allgemeinen sind die Lesghier mittelgroß und kräftig; der Schädel ist breit, das Gesicht breit bis mittelhoch, die Nase stark und dick, die Augen dunkel, die Haare braun bis schwarz (s. Abb. 453).

Kleidung. Die Kleidung der Tschetschenen (s. Abb. 455) besteht aus Leinenhemd, offenem Untergewand aus Kattun oder Seide mit Kragen, Überrock aus gelbem, grauem oder braunem Tuch, Gürtel, Schaffellmütze, Hosen aus Tuch, ledernen Gamaschen, Schuhen (täevjak) aus leichtem Leder, auf Wanderungen aus dickerem

2:Byhan RI3 Abkhaz

Abb. 455. Inguschen von der georgischen Heerstraße (Phot. A. Dirr)

Büffelleder oder Kletterschuhen. Der Kopf wird kahl geschoren, Kinnbart nur von alten Männern getragen.

Die Lesghier kleiden sich ebenso, nur sehen sie meistens schmutzig und abgerissen aus. Über dem zottigen Wettermantel, der Burka, oder statt ihrer tragen die Lesghier in den höher gelegenen Siedlungen einen langen Schafpelz mit breitem, zottigem Kragen (s. Taf. XXX) und statt der weichen Lederschuhe Filzstiefel und -schuhe (s. Abb. 469).

Als Waffe führen die Männer gewöhnlich nur den Dolch bei sich, selten Säbel, Flinte, Pulverhorn, Kugelflasche usw. (s. Abb. 460). Vor hundert Jahren gebrauchten die Inguschen noch hölzerne Schilde, die mit Leder bezogen und mit eisernen Bändern beschlagen waren und kurze Spieße mit knotigem Schaft, der umgedreht auch zum Auflegen der Flinte diente.

Die Hauptbestandteile der weiblichen Kleidung sind fast überall die gleichen wie bei den Tatarinnen: weite Hosen (früher wie bei den Abchasinnen blau, rot oder weiß, s. S. 753), Hemd, Kittel, Gürtel. Die Tschetscheninnen verzieren ihr rotes Hemd an Brust und Schultern mit bunter Stickerei und

Abb. 456. Mütze aus schwarzem Tuch, mit Ziegenfell und rotem Leder besetzt, Tschetschenen (1/6 n. Gr.) (Nach Graf J. Zichy)

den Hosensaum mit gewirkter Borte. Das Haar schneiden sie vorn kurz ab; die Mädchen flechten es hinten in viele kleine, die Frauen in zwei Zöpfe, die sie mit Band dick umwickeln. Den Kopf bedecken sie mit einem mit Münzen oder Metallplättchen benähten Mützchen oder mit einem Tuch; das Haar stecken manche in eine Art Sack (Abb. 533, Fig. 1). Ihr sonstiger Schmuck sind große Ringe.

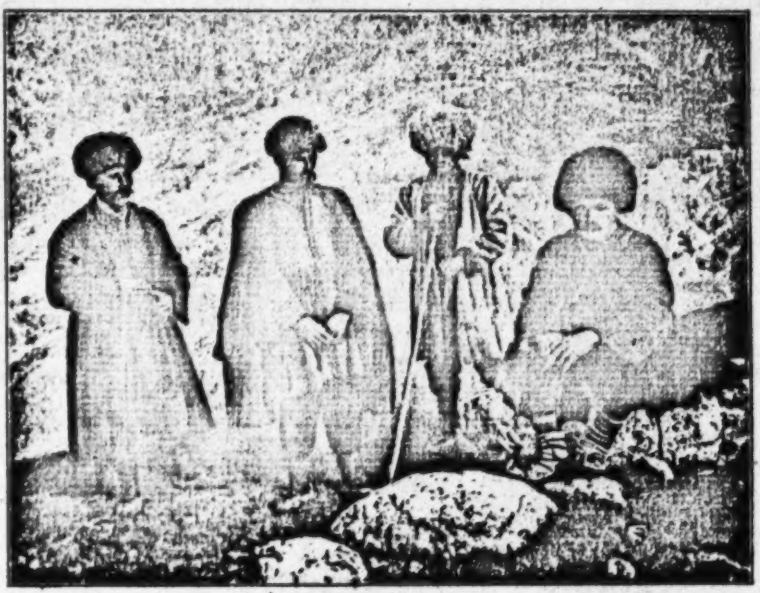


Abb. 457. Küriner aus Kurusch am Ussun-tschai, einem südlichen Nebenfluß des Samur (Nach M. v. Dechy)

aus Metall oder Glas, die am Kopftuch oder an einem über den Kopf gelegten Streifen neben den Ohren angenäht sind (s. Abb. 461). Im Sommer gehen sie barfuß, im Winter in Filzstiefeln, und dann ziehen sie auch einen Pelzrock über.

Der Kittel der Lesghierinnen ist gewöhnlich blau, das Hemd verschiedenfarbig; im kürinischen Unterland sind Hemd und Kittel kurz, dafür die Hosen sehr weit und bauschig, die Schuhe mit hohen Absätzen und Schnäbeln versehen, was auf persischen Einfluß hinweist. Als Schmuck sind bei Andi, Dido, Nordawaren, Kasikumuchen große silberne Ohrreifen mit einer Kugel in

der Mitte verbreitet, die ebenso wie bei den Tschetschenninnen befestigt werden. Die Einförmigkeit der Kleidung wird durch die Verschiedenartigkeit des Kopfschmuckes wirksam abgewandelt. Die Andi-Frauen tragen über der Stirn einen abgesteppten, mit Watte ausgestopften, sichelförmigen Tuchwulst, von dem ein breiter Zeugstreifen über den Kopf nach hinten bis auf den Rücken reicht. Die Dido-Frauen bedecken den Kopf mit einer langen blau und

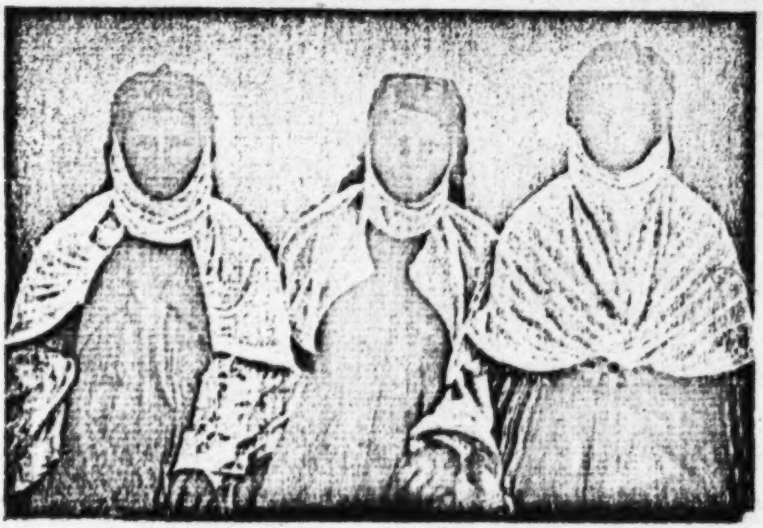


Abb. 458. Junge Awarinnen, Kreis Sakataly
(Phot. A. Dirr)

rot gestreiften Haube, die mit Perlen und Münzen, über der Stirn mit Silberborten und zahlreichen Eförmigen Silberplättchen (s. Abb. 461) benäht ist. Awarinnen, Kasikumuchinnen und die Kürinerinnen von Arachkul haben über der Stirn unter einem einfachen Kopftuch Münzschnüre und auf der Brust einen mit Gold- und Silbermünzen, blanken Knöpfen u. dgl. benähten Latz (vgl. S. 883), und die Awarinnen bei Sakatal einen eimerartigen Kopfaufsatz. Die Dargwa-Frauen u. a. (s. Abb. 461 und 462) wickeln um der Hals ein weißes Tuch und legen darüber ein hinten lang herabfallendes, rotes oder gestreiftes Tuch. Die Artschi-Frauen binden unter einem Kopftuch eine samtene, gold- und silberbestickte Stirnbinde um,

von der — wie in Makedonien — kleine Kettchen herabhängen; das Haar lassen sie sich kurz abscheren, nur vor den Ohren und an der Stirn bleibt es bei den Mädchen stehen. Außer solchem Kopfputz und den erwähnten Ohrringen kommen als weitere Schmucksachen vor: bei den Kasikumuchinnen dreieckiger Halsschmuck (s. Abb. 471), aus zwei bis drei Drähten gewundene Armreifen, in Kubatschi (Dargwa) mit Türkisen u. a. besetzte Armbänder, große Fingerringe mit dicken, eirunden Steinen, Silberflitter auf der Brust bei den Kürinerinnen von Bortsch, und überall silberne Gürtel statt der gewöhnlichen gewebten.

Abb. 459. Dido (Phot. A. Dirr)

Die gewöhnliche Fußbekleidung sind besonders in den höher gelegenen Dörfern gestrickte Stiefel mit dicker Sohle (s. Abb. 464) oder solche aus Filz (Abb. 469), doch tragen Frauen hie und da auch spitze Lederschuhe.

Wohnung. In der nördlichen Tschetschnja sind die größeren Dörfer (a'ûl) erst auf Veranlassung der Russen entstanden; vorher lebten die Tschetschenen in kleinen Weilern oder Einzelgehöften. Die Häuser sind hier und im Gebirge ein- oder zweistöckig, aus Stein oder Holz in der üblichen Art (vgl. S. 725) gebaut und außen geweißt. Die kleinen Dörfer der Inguschen und Kisten sind stark befestigt. Jedes Gehöft ist mit einer hohen Mauer umgeben, an deren vier Ecken kleine Erker angesetzt sind; in ihm erhebt sich ein viereckiger, zwanzig bis fünfundzwanzig Meter hoher Turm, den

chewsurischen gleich mit Sattel- oder Pyramidendach. Der unterste Raum von vier bis sechs Metern im Geviert dient als Stall, das Obergeschoß den Frauen als Küche und Wohnzimmer, das zweite mit Balkon als Wohngemach des Hausvaters. Neben dem Turm steht ein ein- oder zweistöckiges Haus aus Steinen oder Lehmziegeln mit einem bis zwei Zimmern, das die besten Stücke der Einrichtung enthält und zur Aufnahme von Gästen bestimmt ist (s. Abb. 510).

Abb. 460. Hölzerne Pulverflasche mit Messingbeschlägen und lederne Kugelflasche (1/4 und 1/3 n. Gr.) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

Im wildzerklüfteten, kahlen, rauhen Daghestan sind die Dörfer dichter zusammengedrängt, terrassenförmig (Taf. XXIX) an geschützten, leicht zu verteidigenden Orten angelegt wie im makedonischen und ostalbanischen Bergland. Auch die Häuser sind fast ebenso wie dort gebaut und eingerichtet.

Als Baustoff werden im östlichen Unterland und im Flußgebiet des unteren Samur Lehmziegel, in den wenigen Waldgegenden, wie z. B. bei dem awarischen Geschlechte der Antzuch, bei den andischen Kuanada Holz, sonst überall Steine mit grobem Mörtel verwendet. Die Häuser stehen selten unmittelbar an den schmalen, steilen Gassen, sondern im Hofe, der von einer Mauer umschlossen ist. Außer dem Hoftor führen keine Tür oder Fensterlöcher nach außen; letztere sind nur in der inneren Vorderwand eingeschnitten, lukenförmig und mit Läden oder Brettern zu verschließen. Längs der Vorderseite des Hauses (Taf. XXVIII u. Abb. 483) ist oben und unten eine offene, von Holzpfeilern gestützte Vorlaube, an die sich im Obergeschoß beiderseits zuweilen eine Vorratskammer anschließt. Das Dach ist flach — nur in den benachbarten Dörfern des Sakataler Kreises kommen Giebeldächer vor (s. Abb. 465) —, aus Balken, Stangen, Schilf oder Rohr, Lehm und Sand geschichtet, der von Zeit zu Zeit mit einer Steinwalze festgedrückt wird, und bildet gewöhnlich den Vorplatz für das nächste Haus. Das kasikumuchische Kubatschi z. B. steigt in sechzehn solcher Terrassen am Hange hinauf (vgl. Taf. XXVIII).

Das Untergeschoß ist in Stall und Vorratsraum geteilt. Das Obergeschoß umfaßt die Gemächer für Männer und für Frauen und das Gastzimmer. An der Wand ist der offene Kamin mit darüberhängendem Schornstein angebracht, worin mit Holz oder Mistziegeln geheizt wird. Der Estrichfußboden ist mit Teppichen belegt, und auch die Wände sind zuweilen damit behängt; an der Wand stehen die Bettpritschen, Kleidertruhen, Kupfergefäße u. a. Dreieckige Stühle (s. Abb. 466), runde Lehnsessel, geschnitzte Bänke (vgl. S. 472) sind selten, man hockt gewöhnlich auf dem Boden. Wo besondere Frauengemächer vorhanden, sind die Fenster nach morgenländischer Art mit oft schön geschnitzten Holzgittern versehen. Im Gastzimmer werden auf Wandbrettern Krüge, Schüsseln, Teller, Tassen aus Kupfer, Ton, Porzellan, Glas als Schaustücke aufgestellt, und an den Wänden Waffen, Stoffe, Teppiche aufgehängt. Zur Beleuchtung verwendet man Kienspäne, eiserne und Öllämpchen von ähnlicher Gestalt wie die altbabylonisch-vorderasiatischen (s. Abb. 470). In den teilweise gepflasterten Höfen finden sich Sommerküchen oder Herdstellen, Speicher u. a., letztere sind auch wie bei den Gebirgsgeorgiern öfters auf den Dächern untergebracht, so im andischen Dorf Kuanada.

Abb. 461. Dido-Frau
(Nach E. W. Pfizenmayer)

Wirtschaftliches. Den Lebensunterhalt gewinnen die Tschetschenen hauptsächlich aus der Zucht von Schafen, Rindern, Büffeln und Pferden (vor hundert Jahren hatten sie auch noch Schweine); da das Klima rauh ist, lassen viele ihre Schafherden nur in den drei Sommermonaten auf den Alpenweiden grasen, sonst in der Terek-Ebene. Früher pflegten Wohlhabende ihr Vieh gegen Abgabe einer

bestimmten Zahl von Lämmern, Kälbern und Füllen zu verpachten. Der Ackerbau ist im Gebirge, wo jeder geeignete Fleck durch Anlage von Terrassen ausgenutzt wird, wenig ergiebig, und das Getreide: Gerste, Hafer, Weizen wird oft nicht reif. Im Unterlande ist zwar genug Land vorhanden, trotzdem geben die Tschetschenen von ihrer Vorliebe für Viehzucht nicht ab. Getreide wird auf den üblichen Wassermühlen mit wagrechtem Rad gemahlen; an Stelle des Schüttkastens hängt ein Rindentrichter an vier Weidenstricken über dem oberen Stein, und dieser stößt einen am Trichter befestigten Stock an, welcher jeweils den Verschluß des Trichters öffnet. Als Zapfen sitzt an der Welle ein spitzer Stein, der sich in der Höhlung eines anderen dreht (s. Abb. 414).

Abb. 462. Udinnen (Phot. A. Dirr)

Auch im Daghestan überwiegt die Viehzucht (Schafe, Ziegen, Rinder, Pferde, Esel, Büffel), und wie in der Tschetschnja bleiben, die Herden nur den Sommer über auf den Hochweiden, während die Männer, oft von Frauen und Kindern begleitet, die übrige Zeit des Jahres mit ihnen im kaspischen Küstenland oder in den südlichen Steppen zubringen, wo sie in einfachen Schilfhütten hausen.

Die Bodenverhältnisse sind im Osten und Süden bei den Küriern und Dargwa für den Ackerbau günstiger als im Westen, im inneren Daghestan, wo die terrassenförmigen, oft winzig kleinen Felder wie im Karst mit Steinmauern eingehegt (s. S. 241) und, wo angängig, künstlich bewässert werden. Der Ertrag reicht aber zur Ernährung

der Bewohner nicht aus, so daß noch Getreide und Mehl aus dem Unterlande eingeführt werden muß. Das Getreide (Weizen, Hirse, Gerste) wird mit der Sichel geschnitten und mit dem Dreschbrett (s. S. 687) gedroschen; als Tennen benutzen die Andi im Winter künstliche Eisflächen, die sie durch Ausgießen von Wasser erzeugen.

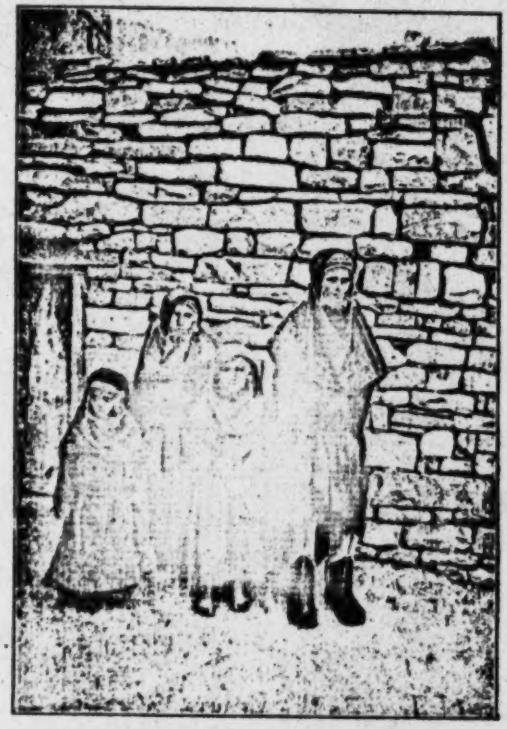
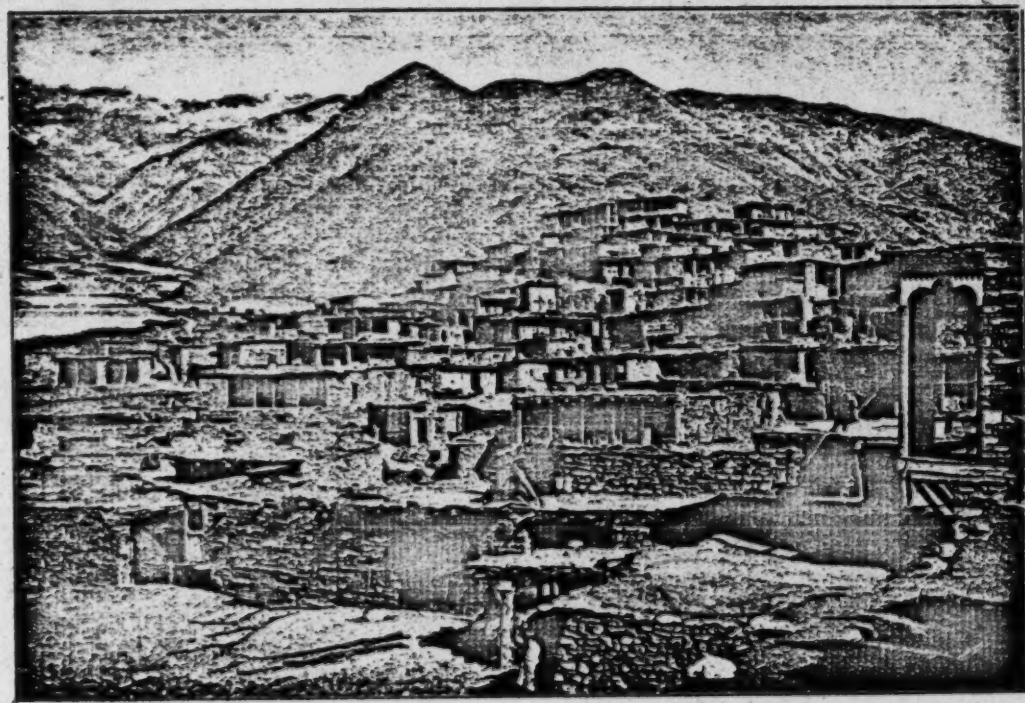


Abb. 468. Frau und Kinder aus Artschi am Chatar, dem östlichen Quellbach des Kara-Koißu (Kaeh M. v. Dechy)

Fischfang (Forellen) und Jagd, die von den Awaren zuweilen noch mit Falken auf Hasen, Fasanen und Rebhühner ausgeübt wird, spielen wirtschaftlich keine große Rolle, und Bienenzucht scheint von Awaren und Kürinern nur in günstigeren Lagen betrieben zu werden.

Die Nahrung der Tschetschenen ist die übliche: Fladenbrot aus Hirse-, Mais- oder Gerstenmehl, Milch, Käse, Zwiebeln, Kräuter, selten Weizenbrot, Fleisch, Eier, im Sommer Obst, das reichlich wächst. Früher wurde viel Schwarzbier getrunken, durch russischen Einfluß haben Teegenuß und Samowar weite Verbreitung gefunden.

Ebenso bescheiden leben die Lesghier: tagsüber von Schwarzbrot aus Gersten- und Puffbohnenmehl, Käse, Zwiebeln u. ä. Das Hauptgericht beim gemeinsamen Mahl sind eine Art Nudeln (chinkal) aus ungesäuertem Gersten-, Hirse-, Mais- oder Bohnenmehlteig geschnitten, dann gekocht und nach Abschütten des Wassers



Tafel XXVIII *Ichrek, rutulisches Dorf im Tale des Kara-Samur*

(Nach M. v. Déchy)

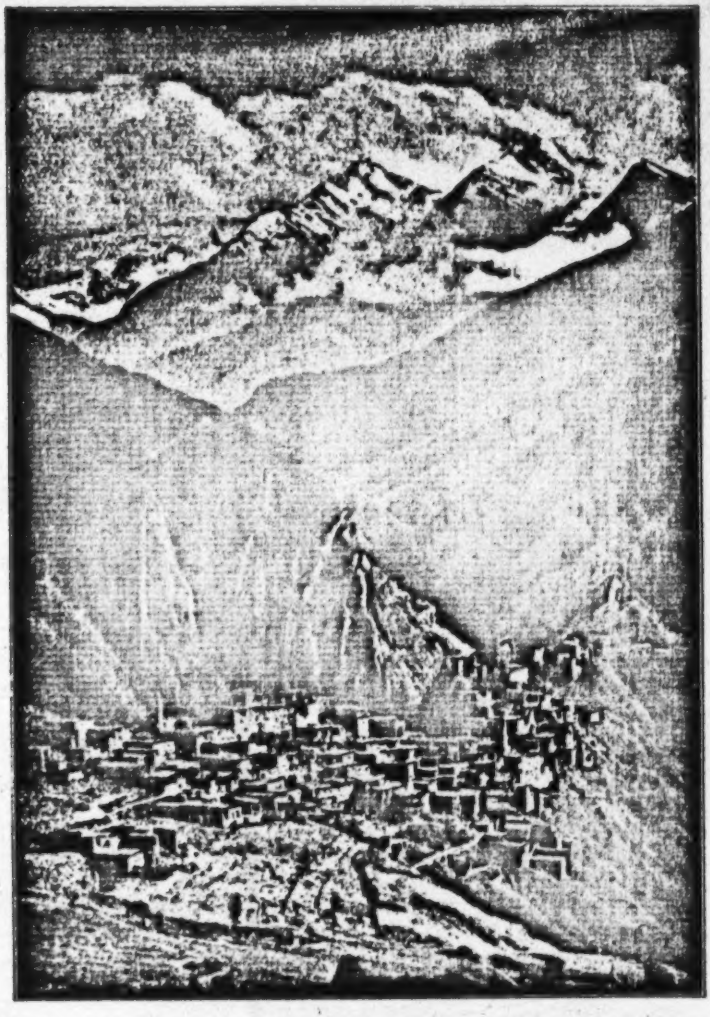
[facing p. 784]

mit Molken oder Essig, Knoblauch und gesalzenem Käse angerichtet. Das Brot wird in der Backgrube gebacken, einer mit Lehm ausgeschmierten Grube, die durch glühende Kohlen erhitzt, beschickt und dann mit einem Deckel verschlossen wird (Vorläufer des georgischen Backofens, s. S. 685). Im Winter verzehrt man in den Dörfern, deren Herden im Flachland weiden, viel luftgetrocknetes Schaffleisch. Die gewöhnlichen Getränke sind Milch und Wasser, bei Festen, wo es auch dünne Weizenbrotfladen, Pilaw, Fleischgerichte, Süßigkeiten, z. B. pekmez, d. i. mit Ton gemischter und getrockneter Traubensaft, u. a. gibt, Schnaps, Most oder gekochter Wein, selten Bier.

Wirtschaftliches. Die Arbeiten sind nach Vorschrift des Herkommens (adat) auf Männer und Frauen verteilt; die ersteren haben die schweren Arbeiten zu verrichten: Hausbauen, Holzfällen und -zerkleinern, Viehwartung, Schlachten, Schafscheren, Pflügen, Grasmähen, Dreschen usw. Die Frauen haben den Haushalt und die Kinder zu besorgen, zu melken, Mistfladen zu machen, Wolle zu reinigen, Getreide zu sieben, Wasser in Holzzylindern (etwa 30 cm im Durchmesser und 60 cm hoch, s. Abb. 480) oder in schön geformten Kupferkrügen (s. Abb. 412, Fig. 9) zu holen.

Erzeugnisse des weiblichen **Hauswerkes** im Daghestan sind: Stickereien mit Gold- und Silberfäden auf Samt, Seide, Leder; Satteltaschen und Kleidersäcke aus Teppichgewebe (palas); derbe Korn- und Mehlsäcke aus Ziegenhaaren; wollene Strumpfschuhe mit dicken Sohlen; Stricke und Bänder aus Wolle oder Ziegenhaar; Satelunterlagen und Stiefel aus Filz- oder Lodenstoff; gewebte und geknüpfte Teppiche aus Schafwolle und Ziegenhaar — langhaarige besonders bei den Tzachuren; ärmellose Wettermäntel aus Lodenstoff bei den Andi; feine und grobe, sogenannte lesghische Tuche aus Ziegen-, Schaf- und Kamelwolle bei den Andi, Nordawaren, nördlichen Laken, Dargwa. Die Tschetscheninnen stellen ebenfalls Teppiche, Filzdecken und dünne Kleiderstoffe (tsoka) her.

Handwerker gibt es bei den Tschetschenen fast gar nicht, dagegen sind sie im Daghestan wie in Georgien infolge persischer und tatarischer Einwirkung reichlich vertreten und bodenständig. Aus den unfruchtbaren Strichen wandern sie zeitweilig in kaukasische und russische Städte, um dort zu arbeiten, so aus dem Kreise Andi Maurer, Steinmetzen, Zimmerleute, Schlosser; aus dem Kasikumuchenkreise, wo es kein Obst, keine Reben und fast kein Ackerland gibt, besonders Silber-, Kupfer-, Waffenschmiede, Verzinner.



Tafel XXIX Tindi am Kilia-Bach, einem östlichen Zufluß des Andischen Koißu

(Nach M. v. Déchy)

[facing p. 785]

Als Kleingewerbe betreibt man im Küriner Kreis die Herstellung von Mühl- und Grabsteinen (s. Abb. 492); von Sieben, Säcken, Seilen, Stoffen aus Hanf bei den Dargwa; Töpferei (Abb. 467, Fig. 4 und Abb. 470) in einigen Dargwa- und küriuischen Dörfern; Zimmerei, Tischlerei, Herstellung von Sattelgestellen im nordawarischen Kreise Gunib. Mit dem Schnitzen von Löffeln, Löffelständern, Mehl-, Salz- und anderen Gefäßen (Abb. 467, Fig. 5 und 6) beschäftigt man sich in einigen Ortschaften der Dargwa, Awaren, Andi, Küriner. Musikinstrumente verfertigt man im Kreise Kaitach (Dargwa), mit Messing- und Nickeldraht eingelegte Holzgeräte in Nordawarien. Gerberei, Schuhmacherei, Kürschnerei sind im awarischen Kreis Gunib, bei den Dargwa, Laken und Kürinern verbreitet. Kupferschmiede (Abb. 467, Fig. 1—3) und Klempner finden sich hauptsächlich bei den Laken, vereinzelt in den Kreisen Gunib und Andi; Grobschmiede bei den Dargwa, im Kreise Gunib, bei den Laken und bei den östlichen Kürinern.

Abb. 464. Aus bunter, vorwiegend weißer, schwarzer und kirschroter Wolle gestrickter Stiefel, Dorf Beschita der Kaputschi am Chwan-or, westlicher Nebenfluß des Awarischen Koißu (1/4 n. Gr.)
(Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

Gold- und Silberschmiede trifft man an vielen Orten an; der Hauptsitz dieses Gewerbes ist aber der Kreis Kaitago—Tabassaran. Hier verfertigt man Gürtel, Gürtelschließen, Ringe, Zigarettenspitzen, Stockgriffe, Beschläge für Dolche, Säbel, Pistolen, Schmucksachen, Einlegearbeiten in Horn, Elfenbein, Perlmutter, Stahl, Schmelzarbeiten u. a., die auch nach Rußland ausgeführt werden. Großes Ansehen genossen früher die Waffenschmiede von Kubatschi (tatarisch Kubadži, arabisch Sarach-Karan = Waffenschmied, eigener Name Augwugan, Ügbuk, vom armenischen Namen der alten Albanier: Ayovan), die schon im sechsten Jahrhundert n. Chr. erwähnt werden; zwar werden auch heute noch Klingen und Flinten hier und in einigen anderen Dörfern der Dargwa, Laken und Awaren hergestellt, doch ist seit dem Aufhören der inneren Fehden und der Kämpfe gegen die Russen

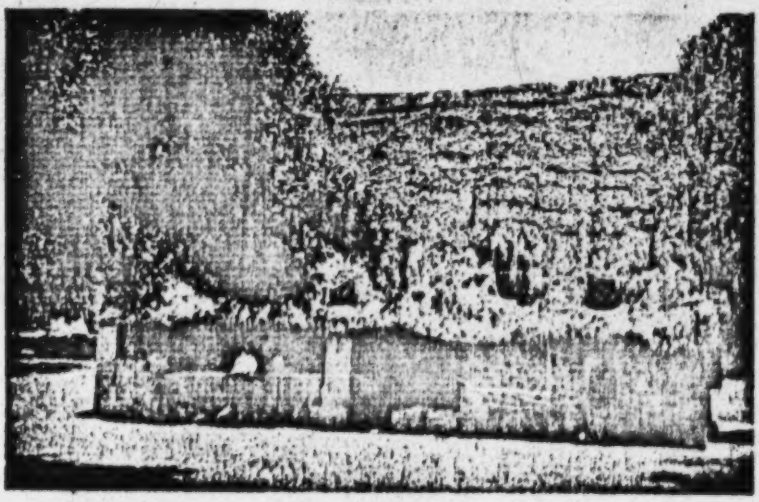


Abb. 465. Awarisches Haus, Kreis Sakataly (Phot. A. Birr)

dieses Gewerbe sehr zurückgegangen. Klingen (s. Abb. 449, 451) wurden früher viel nach Rußland ausgeführt, und die lesghischen Flintenläufe sollen besser als die russischen gewesen sein, obwohl man für beide altes Eisen, für Dolchklingen gerne alte Hufeisen, verwendete.

Abb. 466. Lesghischer Stuhl (1/17 n. Gr.) (Nach Graf J. Zichy)

Die Entdeckung einiger alter europäischer Klingen aus Ungarn, Solingen usw., welche die Meister früher einmal irgendwoher erhielten, da Waffen bekanntlich im ganzen Morgenlande von Indonesien bis Marokko gewandert und verschleppt und weiterverarbeitet worden sind, gab wohl Veranlassung zu der Sage, daß die ersten Waffenschmiede über die Türkei aus Europa (Frangistan) hieher gekommen seien, obgleich die ganze Arbeitsweise und die Art der Verzierungen auf persisch-tatarischen Ursprung hinweisen, und dafür sprechen auch die mit Bildhauerarbeiten geschmückten Ruinen alter Bauwerke und Gegenstände, die als alte Erbstücke dort aufbewahrt oder gefunden worden sind.

Verkehr. Die Beförderung der Waren ist in diesem östlichen Teile des Kaukasus wegen der Zerklüftung und Schroffheit der Talwände sehr schwierig. Die meisten Ortschaften im Hochgebirge sind nur auf

Abb. 467. 1 bis 3 Kupferne Wasserkannen; 4 Tonkrug; 5 Wasserkanne, aus einem Stück gearbeitet, mit Brandverzierungen; 6 Holztasse für Sauermilch; 7 Kessel mit drei Füßen; 1, 2, 4, 5, 7 Lesghier, 3 Kasikumuch, 6 Tschetschenen (1, 3 1/9, 4 1/5, 2, 5 bis 7 1/7 n. Gr.)
(1, 3, 5, 6 Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin, 2 Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 4 und 7 nach Graf J. Zichy)

schmalen Saumpfaden zu erreichen, die oft, wenn der Fluß keinen Raum läßt, wie in Albanien hoch oben an steilen Felswänden hinführen; wo die Felswand senkrecht abfällt, schlägt man Pflöcke ein und legt Gestrüpp und Steine darüber.

Außer vereinzelten alten persisch-tatarischen Steinbrücken im östlichen Daghestan kommen zwei Arten von hölzernen vor: Stege aus zwei bis drei Bohlen, in der Mitte wagrecht, beiderseits stark abfallend, mit oder ohne Geländer aus dünnen Stangen, nur für Reiter und Fußgänger benutzbar; und Brücken, deren Uferstützpfeiler aus kreuzweis geschichteten Balken, und deren

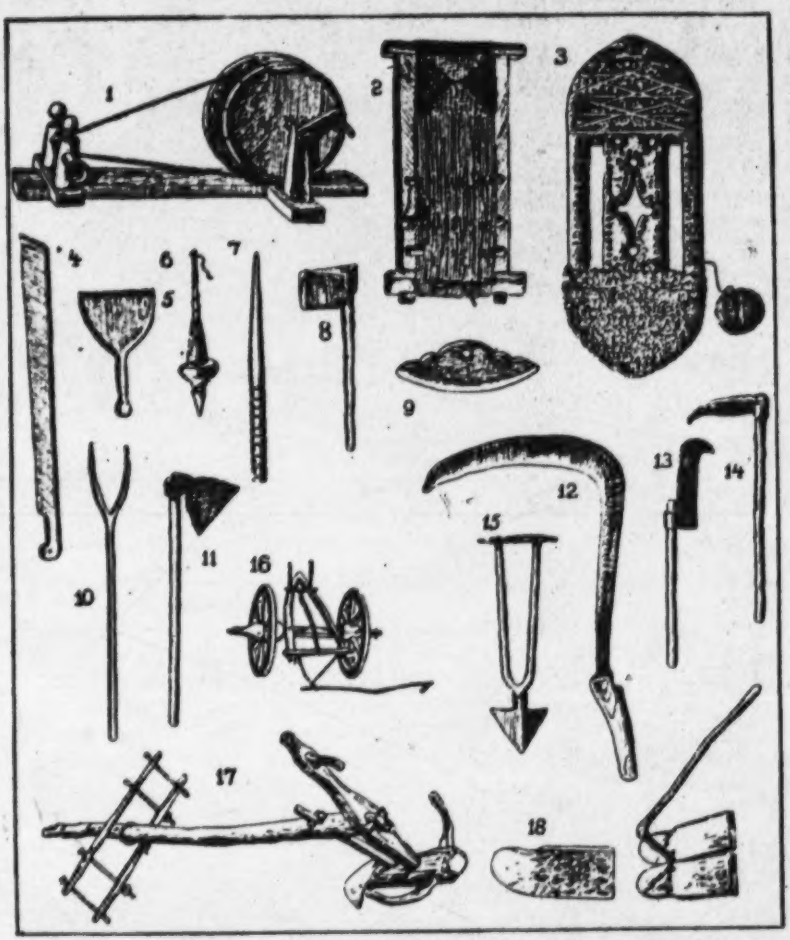


Abb. 468. Kaukasische Wirtschaftsgeräte: 1 Garnrad; 2 Bänderwebstuhl; 3 Strickbrett für Strümpfe; 4 Holzschwert zum Flachsbrechen; 5 Hanfriffel aus Holz mit eisernen Spitzen; 6 Spindel aus Holz; 7 Garnspule; 8 Axt; 9 Webeschwert; 10 Strohgabel; 11 Hacke; 12 Sichel; 13 Hippe zum Abhauen von Ästen; 14 Buschmesser; 15 eiserner Spaten mit gegabeltem Stiel; 16 Lastwagengestell; 17 Pflug mit eiserner Schar und Joch; 18 Dreschbrett, Unterseite mit Steinsplittern beschlagen; 1 bis 3 Lesghier, 8 Sakataler Awaren (2 1/5, 3 1/3, 4 1/12, 6, 7 und 12 1/8 n. Gr.) (Nach Graf J. Zichy)

Bahn aus Balkenlagen besteht, von denen beiderseits immer eine über die andere ein Stück hinausgeschoben ist, bis die Mitte des Flusses fast erreicht ist und der Zwischenraum durch eine Lage geschlossen werden kann.

Abb. 469. Männerstiefel aus Filz, Kasikumuchen (1/10 n. Gr.) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin)

Auf den Saumpfaden werden Lasten und Menschen von Pferden befördert; im Unterland verkehren auf den fahrbaren Wegen von Ochsen und Büffeln gezogene zweirädrige Wagen (s. Abb. 418, 504), die mit Gitterwänden und Sonnendach ausgestattet sind; der Fuhrmann steht auf dem Deichselansatz. Die Räder sind wegen des Mangels an Brücken sehr hoch und haben viele Speichen; die Felgen bestehen aus mehreren Stücken (in Rußland aus einem) und sind meist breit.

Gesellschaft und Familie. Standesunterschiede sind weder bei den Tschetschenen, noch bei den Lesghiern vorhanden. Früher hatten sie kriegsgefangene Sklaven, die sich aber durch Heirat oder Freilassung einbürgern konnten. Das Volk (nachtše) der Tschetschenen zerfällt in Stämme oder Gesellschaften (taipa) und diese in Dörfer (a'ûl), deren Bewohner denselben Familiennamen führen, also aus einer Sippe hervorgegangen sind. Die Ältesten sind in Gemeinde und Familie ausschlaggebend, richten sich jedoch nach Herkommen (adat) und religiösem Gesetz (šariat). Sie werden von allen mit Ehrfurcht behandelt, ebenso in der Familie seitens der Kinder der Vater, dessen Zorn den Sohn sogar zum Selbstmord zu treiben vermag.

Auch die Eheschließung erfolgt nach den Vorschriften des Gesetzes, von alten Bräuchen hat sich dabei wenig erhalten. Gewöhnlich nimmt der Mann nur eine Frau und zahlt nach Annahme der Werbung seitens des Mädchens und dessen Vaters einen geringen Kaufpreis. Bei den Awaren steht jedem Mädchen das Recht zu, sich nach ihrem Wunsche einen Mann zu nehmen; sie geht zu ihm ins Haus, und er muß sie dann heiraten. Mädchenraub kommt bei den Andi, aber auch nur noch selten vor.

Abb. 470. Lampe aus rötlichem Ton mit weißen Strichen, Kasikumuchen (1/4 n. Gr.) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin)

Bei den Dido wird ein eigenartiger Brauch als Rest davon geübt: zwei Freunde des Bräutigams gehen zur Braut ins Haus, werfen ihr einen Schafpelz über den Kopf und ziehen sie daran auf der Straße, wo sie von den Leuten mit Schmutz beworfen wird, bis ins Haus des Bräutigams. Noch klarer ist ein Hochzeitsbrauch der Andi von Tindi: die Braut reitet, begleitet von Frauen und von bewaffneten Männern, die Fackeln auf hohen Stangen tragen, dem Bräutigam entgegen, der mit ähnlichem Gefolge kommt. Wo die Züge aufeinanderstoßen, beginnt ein Scheingefecht; man sucht Gefangene zu machen und sich gegenseitig die Fackeln auszuschießen. Die Braut wird inzwischen von ihren Freundinnen den weiblichen Angehörigen des Bräutigams übergeben, die sie ins Haus des Bräutigams führen; dieser kommt bald darauf mit zwei Freunden als Wächtern (vgl. S. 762) und hat mit der ihm Angetrauten einen heftigen Kampf zu bestehen.

Abb. 471. Silberner Brustschmuck mit Filigranarbeit, Lesghier (1/4 n. Gr.) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin)

Die Dido sollen früher auch Blutsverwandte geheiratet und dieselbe Sitte wie die Großrussen gehabt haben, die bei den Kürinern von Kurusch noch besteht: daß der Vater seinen minderjährigen Sohn mit einem erwachsenen Mädchen verheiratete, mit dem er dann selbst lebte; die Kinder fielen nach erlangter Volljährigkeit des Sohnes diesem und dem Vater je zur Hälfte zu. Bei den Inguschen übernahm früher der älteste Sohn nach dem Tode des Vaters dessen Frauen außer der eigenen Mutter.

Die Frau trägt keinen Schleier, wird gut behandelt und genießt in ihrem Bereich volle Freiheit; sie verfügt über ihre Mitgift, darf erben und vermachen. Scheidung ist sehr leicht; der Mann spricht sie aus, oder die Frau flüchtet zu ihren Eltern. Die Awarinnen sind sehr reizbar, so daß sie bei Untreue des Mannes sich hinreißen lassen, ihn zu ermorden, und umgekehrt tötet der Mann die schuldige Frau mit dem Dolch. Entführung wird mit Blut gesühnt (vgl. S. 717), doch willigt der Mann oft in friedliche Abtretung.

Die Kinder werden oft sehr lange, bis ins fünfte und sechste Jahr, gesäugt. Die Rufnamen der Tschetschenen sind noch nicht durch mohammedanische verdrängt worden, die männlichen entstammen meist dem Tierreich: Wolf (bors), Bär (tscheburs), Hase (pagal), Adler (ersu), Falke (leg), Taube (chokši), Hund (poe), Schwein (chaka); weibliche: Blume (dziesok), Engel (maleika),

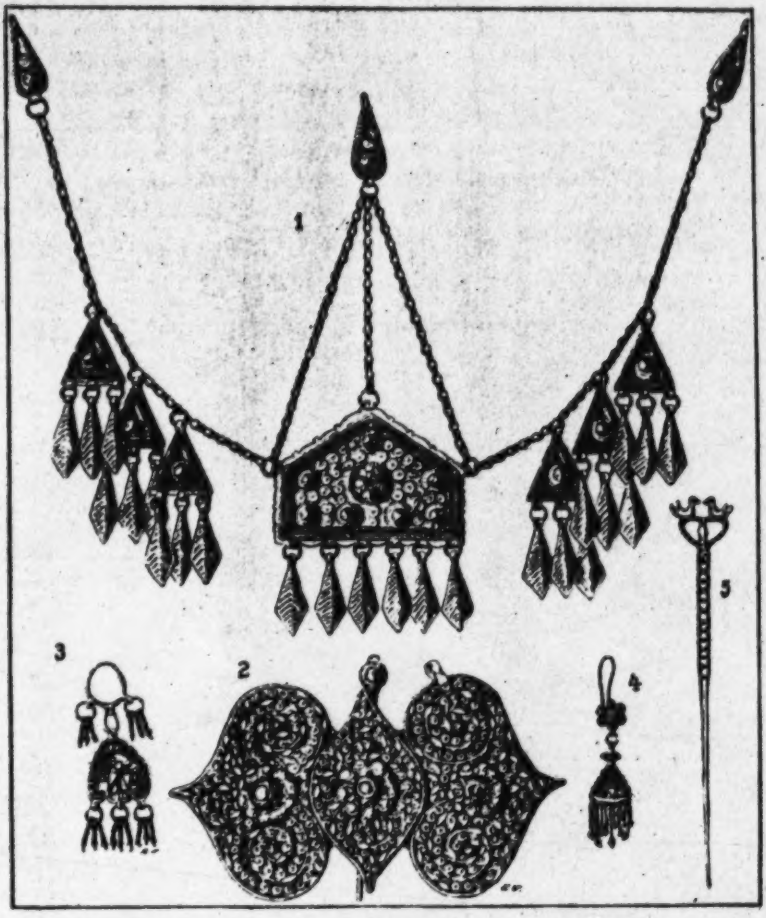


Abb. 472. Lesghischer Silberschmuck: 1 Brustgehänge aus Botlich; 2 Gürtelschließe; 3 und 4 Ohrgehänge; 5 Haarnadel (1/3 n. Gr.)
(Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

Kalbereiterin (asir-vachara), die auf einer Hündin Reitende (osali-vachara).

Tod. Bestattungen erfolgen jetzt nach islamischem Brauche. Früher gaben die Tschetschenen Verstorbenen, die in voller Kleidung und Bewaffnung beigesetzt wurden, drei Brote und Schnaps mit ins Grab, an dem mit seinem Pferde genau so wie bei den Tscherkessen (s. S. 766)

verfahren wurde, und die Frauen klagten dort eine Woche lang. Am Tage nach der Beerdigung fand die „Begräbniserinnerungsfeier" statt, wobei alle Verwandten und Bekannten bewirtet wurden; die von ihnen verzehrten Speisen kamen nach ihrer Meinung dem Toten zugute. Später wurde die „Bett-Gedächtnisfeier" abgehalten, nach welcher der Verstorbene im Jenseits sein Bett verlassen durfte; sie war verbunden mit Wettschießen und Wettrennen, und vier von den Pferden wurden ihm und seinen Vorfahren gewidmet. Nach zwei Jahren wurde die „große Gedächtnisfeier" begangen, und nach dem vierten durfte die Witwe die Trauer ablegen und wieder heiraten. Da sie trotzdem noch als Eigentum des Verstorbenen galt, beanspruchten dessen Angehörige nach ihrem Tode ihre Leiche, um sie neben seinem Grabe zu bestatten. Für Frauen und Mädchen waren keine Gedächtnisfeiern gebräuchlich.

Abb. 473. Helm, Tschetschenen (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin)

Auf den mit Steinplatten und Brettern ausgeschlagenen Gräbern werden Denksteine (vgl. Abb. 492) aufgestellt. Gräber von Glaubenskämpfern sind heilig und durch eine daneben aufgepflanzte hölzerne Lanze mit weißem oder rotem Wimpel gekennzeichnet (vgl. Band II, 1, Abb. 244); meist erhebt sich über ihnen ein Häuschen oder Kuppelbau. Die Inguschen und Laken pflegen auf den Gräbern nach alter Weise Steine kastenförmig aufzuhäufen und einen mannshohen Stein darauf zu stellen. Im sechzehnten und siebzehnten Jahrhundert setzte man die Toten in kegel- oder hüttenförmigen Grabbauten (kaša) von 4×4 m Grundfläche und 8—10 m Höhe mit zwei bis drei Reihen Luken bei; man legte sie darin auf die steinernen Wandbänke und gab ihnen Nahrung und alle möglichen Gerätschaften mit (vgl. S. 736f. und Abb. 494). Außer diesen Sippentotenhäusern trifft man an vielen Stellen in der Tschetschnja noch solche

mit Vorraum und Kuppeldach, die von der Art der erwähnten westossischen zu sein scheinen, und auf den Bergen unterirdische, die älteren Ursprungs sein dürften.

Glauben. Der Islam hatte im Daghestan schon gegen Ende des achten Jahrhunderts festen Fuß gefaßt, während er in der Tschetschnja, wo das Christentum angeblich im vierten Jahrhundert

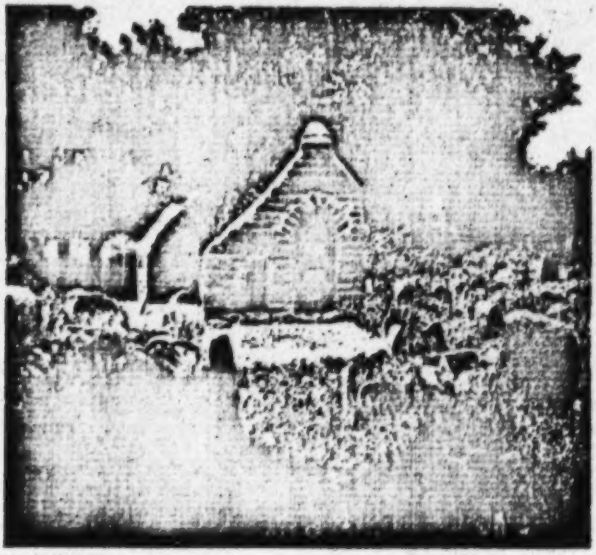


Abb. 474. Awarische Grabhäuser, Kreis Sakatal
(Phot. A. Dirr)

von Georgien aus eingeführt worden sein soll, zwar auch eingedrungen, aber bald wieder verschwunden war. Erst im achtzehnten Jahrhundert übernahmen die Tschetschenen ihn von neuem von den Kymyken und Kabardinern und waren im neunzehnten Jahrhundert zusammen mit den benachbarten Lesghiern eifrige Mitstreiter der Glaubenskämpfer Kasi-Mullah und Schamyl gegen die Russen (bis 1859).

Zwei Derwischorden (tarikat, vgl. Bd. II, 1, S. 394) haben unter ihnen Anhänger gefunden; die Nakschubendi und die Kunta-Sekte, vom Mullah Kunta-Chadschi in den sechziger Jahren gegründet. Sie tragen die Gebetschnur, den Rosenkranz, um den Hals, umarmen sich, beten laut (ßikra), bilden bei ihren Andachten eine Kette,

klatschen in die Hände, wiederholen dauernd und immer schneller: „la illachä il allach“ (= es gibt keinen Gott außer Allah) und drehen sich wie die Mehlewi im Kreise, bis sie besinnungslos umfallen.

Die Moscheen (mi'äbed) gleichen im Daghestan den persischen, in der Tschetschnja unterscheiden sie sich nicht von gewöhnlichen Häusern und sind ohne Minaret, der Geistliche (budun = Ausrufer) ruft vom Dach oder vor der Moschee zum Gebet.

Lesghier und Tschetschenen erfüllen getreu die äußerlichen Vorschriften des Islam, sie waschen und baden sich täglich fünfmal, geben Almosen, pilgern nach Mekka, um als „Chadschi“ zurückzukehren. Das Gebet verrichten die Awaren mangels einer Moschee auf Steinaufbauten (von 2 × 3 bei 1 m Höhe) in der Nähe einer Quelle oder eines Flusses. Zu den Gräbern von Heiligen (pir-kend) macht man Wallfahrten; so begeben sich z. B. kürinische und udische Frauen an das Grab des Suleiman in Liga, wohl um Kindersegen zu erbitten.

Nur wenige sind Christen, wie die Uden, von denen die in Nisch wohnenden armenisch-gregorianisch, die in Wartashen orthodox sind. Reste alter Kirchen sind im Daghestan nicht vorhanden, in der Tschetschnja dagegen eine größere Anzahl. Die besterhaltene ist die Tchaba-erda (= der Heilige der 2000) bei Pui im Assatal, etwa 15 m lang, mit Säulenvorhalle und mit Bildhauerwerken geschmückt, die nicht georgischer Art sind. Jährlich einmal wallfahrteten die Inguschen noch vor hundert Jahren dahin und opferten Tiere, welche ein alter Priester (tsain sag) schlachtete; Gehirn und Knochen wurden nach dem Festschmaus in die Kirche gebracht. Im Juni zogen sie nach einer hochgelegenen Höhle im Assatal beim Dorfe Wapila, worin sich ein eisernes Kreuz befand; zu Pfingsten und zu Neujahr, das drei Tage früher als das christliche fällt, auf die Berge, um in einer alten Kirche im Gau Metschal dem heiligen Gaiaerd Flinten, Kugeln und Kerzen zu opfern. Auch bei den Kisten sind Heiligtümer vorhanden, die dem heiligen Georg und der heiligen Maria geweiht sind (vgl. S. 744). Christlicher Herkunft ist auch die mit dem Sonntag (chkyrude, vom griechischen kyrios = Herr) beginnende Woche der Tschetschenen; die anderen Tage werden mit ersten, zweiten Tag usw. bezeichnet, der Sonnabend mit ša'at (= Sabbat).

Bei den Lesghiern scheinen sich Reste ihrer vorislamischen Religion kaum erhalten zu haben, und auch bei den Tschetschenen

sterben mit den älteren Leuten die Überlieferungen über ihre Götterwelt und deren Kult aus. Ihre Gebete und Opfer richten sie, auch wenn sie für andere Götter und Geister bestimmt waren, stets mit an den Schöpfer der Welt, den Vater der Götter (Dele, Dala). Eine große Rolle spielten der Gott des Donners (Seli), dessen Tochter (Seli Sata) die Beschützerin der Jungfrauen war; die Sonnengöttin (Dela Moloh) mit ihrer Mutter Asa, gegen deren Aufgangsort die Betenden schauten und auch ihre Betplätze gewendet waren, während Monde und Sterne weniger beachtet wurden; die auf dem Kasbek thronende „Mutter der Stürme" (Dardsa-närilk), deren sieben Söhne (Dardsa-kuangish) zum Himmel flogen, wo sie noch jetzt zu sehen sind (Großer Bär); der einäugige Herr der Wälder und des Wildes (Elta), den auch die Lesghier noch unter dem arabischen Namen Abdal (= Diener Gottes) kennen. Andere Naturgottheiten waren: die „Mutter der Gewässer" (Chi-nana), der Schutzherr des Getreides und des daraus erzeugten Bieres und Schnapses (Meler-erda); der Gott des Krieges (Molzy-erda). Das Wesen einiger anderer Gottheiten, die allgemeine Verehrung genossen, denen Heiligtümer (elgyts) oder alte Kirchen geweiht waren und Opfer an Vieh, Brot, Bier, Schnaps, Kerzen, Geld und Wertsachen dargebracht wurden, wie: Tuschol, der besonders von Frauen verehrt wird, Misr, Amgali-erda auf dem Berge Artz-choi, Tamysh-erda auf dem „Roten Berge" (inguschisch: budur lam) beim Dorfe Chuli, Mätseli auf dem Mätty, ist nicht mehr klar erkennbar. Gewisse Einzelheiten sprechen dafür, daß sie Fruchtbarkeitsspender waren, aber ihre Verehrung wurde offenbar mit dem Ahnenkult verquickt und blieb auch an den Kirchen haften, die zur Zeit der größten Ausdehnung des georgischen Reiches und des Christentums in der Tschetschnja an Stelle heidnischer Betstätten errichtet worden waren.

Die Ahnenseelenverehrung war bis zuletzt lebendig geblieben, und jede Sippe und die daraus erwachsenen Dörfer, Gaue und Stämme hatten ihre besonderen Schutzgeister (erda, inguschisch tsu). Die Tschetschenen glaubten, daß die eigentliche Seele des Menschen, sein „Wesen" (taram) nach seinem Tode in gleicher Weise wie zuvor weiterlebe, während die Lebenskraft mit dem Körper zusammen sterbe; jene aber wandere nach Westen unter die Erde ins Jenseits (Deli-Ailli), wo sie sich zu den Seelen früher verstorbener Verwandten, zu ihrer Sippe geselle. Auch eine Eheschließung im Jenseits kannten sie, wobei der Vater eines ver-

sterbenen Burschen das Anerbieten des Vaters eines verstorbenen Mädchens nie ablehnte, obwohl er einen hohen Brautpreis zahlen mußte (vgl. S. 811).

Vom Christentum und vom Islam übernahmen die Tschetschenen die Begriffe Hölle (dsodizoheth) und Paradies (ageret), die von einer Vergeltung für gute und böse in dieser Welt (deli-machli) vollbrachte Taten. Für jede Seele ist im Himmel ein hölzernes Gerippe vorhanden, das zu schaukeln und mit Fleisch sich zu bedecken beginnt, sobald der Körper stirbt und die Seele auf einer Leiter zum Himmel emporsteigt; hier belebt sie den ihr bestimmten Körper, der aber je nach ihrem Verhalten auf Erden schön oder häßlich ist. Ebenfalls aus dem Islam sind die Vorstellungen von guten und bösen, den Menschen wohl- oder übelgesinnten Geistern (dzin), von Teufeln (šaitan) übernommen, während die bösartigen Waldteufel und -frauen (almas) wie anderswo (s. oben S. 714) einheimischen Ursprungs sind.

Die Seele des Ahnen war auch der Schutzgeist (Seli) des häuslichen Herdes, und ihm war der Mittwoch (Ker-Seli) geweiht. Herd mit Kessel, Haken, Kette, Feuer, Asche galten als heilig; von ihm nahm die Braut beim Verlassen des Elternhauses feierlichen Abschied, und der Mörder fand wie bei den Albanern den Schutz des Hausvaters, sobald er die Kesselkette anfaßte, selbst wenn es ein Haus der ihm feindlichen Sippe war. Der Schwur auf die Ahnenseelen galt als der schwerste, und bei Setzung von Grenzsteinen und bei Landteilung rief man ihre Rache auf den herab, der die Abmachungen bräche. Dem säumigen Schuldner oder einem mutmaßlichen Diebe drohte der Geschädigte, daß er auf dem Grabe seiner Vorfahren einen Hund schlachten werde, wenn er nicht Ersatz leiste oder sich durch einen Eid reinige.

Der Verehrung der Götter und der Ahnen dienten Heiligtümer (elgyts), kleine Hütten von der Art der Totenhäuser (kaša) mit ein oder zwei Türen auf der Ost- und Nordseite, in denen Hörner und Geweihe und weiße Zeichen (rytš) als Opfergaben niedergelegt wurden (vgl. o. S. 741). Im Gau Chamchin opferte man auch neben Friedhöfen bei viereckigen Steinsäulen, in denen auf der Ostseite eine Nische ausgemeißelt war, in die der Betende seinen Kopf neben einer brennenden Kerze legte. An dem Heiligtume betete die Sippe, das Dorf oder eine größere Gemeinde jährlich einmal und brachte Schafe, Bier, Schnaps, eine besondere Festspeise (tegum)

und Brote, wovon eines dreieckig sein mußte, als Opfergaben dar, die dann gemeinsam verzehrt wurden.

Die Opferpriester (tsain-sag) wurden von den Inguschen auf Lebenszeit gewählt, oder sie gehörten nach Herkommen einer bestimmten Sippe an. Sie befaßten sich auch mit Traum- und Zukunftdeuten, und wenn einer eine Gottheit gekränkt hatte, bestimmten sie durch das Werfen von Losen — drei Stäbchen aus einem Löffel — die zu leistenden Opfer (vgl. Abb. 561). Neben ihnen gab es Wahrsager (dzyryk), die sich während der Nacht im Heiligtum mit einem Ohr auf den Boden legten und so eine Mitteilung der Gottheit erwarteten. Wahrsagerinnen pflegten für ihre Zwecke Hammelknochen, Spiegel, Steine und ähnliches zu verwenden.

Als Abwehrzauber nähen die Küriner Amulette in die Kleider am Rücken ein, und Regen suchen die Andi auf dieselbe Weise wie die Balkanvölker herbeizuzaubern (vgl. auch S. 770): ein Mädchen wird, ganz in Blätter und Zweige gehüllt, von den übrigen im Gesang um Regen bittend, durch das Dorf geführt, dann baden alle im Fluß und opfern ein Schaf. Den bösen Geist, der im Kopfe Schmerzen verursacht, holt man heraus, indem man mit einem Messer ein Loch in den Schädel des Kranken schneidet (Trepanation). Für einen vom Blitz Erschlagenen schlachtete man dem Urheber des Todes, dem Donnergott — wie die Osseten (s. S. 816), die Abchasen und Tscherkessen (s. S. 769f.) —, ein Tier, gewöhnlich eine Kuh zum Opfer und hängte deren Haut und Kopf an einer Stange auf.

Abb. 475. Messingschlange, soll darunter vergrabene Wertsachen gegen Diebstahl und Verderben schützen (1/2 n. Gr.) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Berlin)

Von Rechtsbräuchen, die älter als die weltlichen und religiösen Gebote (adat und šariat) sind, ist wenig bekannt. Blutrache wird bei den Awaren noch geübt.

Bei den Inguschen spielte, wie oben erwähnt, vor hundert Jahren der Hund eine ähnliche Rolle, wie es bei den Osseten (s. S. 823) und bei den Chewsuren (s. S. 747) der Fall ist, wenn ein Mann bei einem anderen ein Verlangen durchsetzen will. Ein Schuldner oder ein des Diebstahles Beschuldigter mußte am heiligen Felsen (jerda), zu dem Hundeknochen und -kot gebracht worden waren, schwören und dabei anerkennen, daß seine Ahnen die Ahnen des Klägers auf den Schultern tragen sollten, wenn er die Wahrheit verleugne.

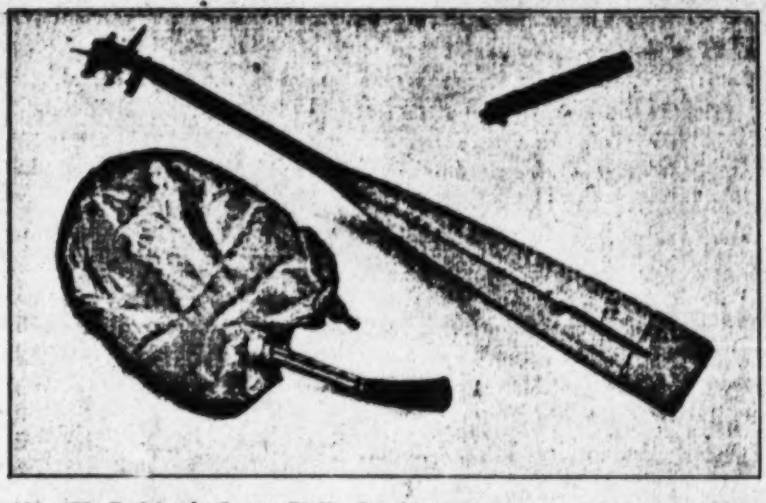


Abb. 476. Dudelsack, Laute, Pfeife, Lesghier (Nach M. v. Deeky)

Der Islam hat es bewirkt, daß ein großer Teil des Lesens und Schreibens kundig ist. Knaben und Mädchen lernen den Koran lesen und vor allem tatarisch schreiben, da dieses im östlichen Daghestan die allgemeine Verkehrssprache ist, während es im Westen das Awarische ist.

Spiel und Tanz. Bei den Inguschen tanzten früher die Männer allein, einzeln oder in Reihen und Kreisen in Begleitung von Schalmeien, Dudelsack oder Pfeifen, und ebenso tanzten die Frauen unter sich, wobei ihnen ein blinder Spielmann aufspielte. Der lesghische Tanz, der von allen kaukasischen Völkern übernommen worden ist, versinnbildlicht das Werben des Mannes um das scheue, fliehende Weib; die Tänzer bewegen Kopf und Arme sinngemäß, den Körper halten sie möglichst gerade, während sie mit den Füßen kleine, sehr schnelle Schritte seitwärts machen. Auch Waffentänze sind gebräuchlich: ein einzelner Mann tanzt zwischen Dolchen, die in der Erde stecken, oder er hält solche in den Händen und zeigt seine Geschicklichkeit in deren Handhabung. Die Begleitmusik liefern beim Tanz eine Trommel und eine Klarinette, beim Singen die Laute (awarisch t'ara) oder die Geige (tschetschenisch tšuandurki) mit je zwei oder drei Saiten.

4. Indogermanische Völker

a) Die Osseten

Die Osseten, bei Ptolemäus im zweiten Jahrhundert n. Chr. Ossilier genannt, hießen bei den arabischen und mittelalterlichen Schriftstellern Asen oder Alanen, beim russischen Chronisten Nestor (um 1100) Jasi.

In den ersten Jahrhunderten n. Chr. hatten sie das Gebiet zwischen dem Don und dem Asowschen Meere inne, das wahrscheinlich von ihnen seinen Namen hat, und bildeten einen Teil der Alanen, deren Hauptmasse von den Goten und Hunnen am Beginn der Völkerwanderungen mit nach Westen fortgerissen wurde (vielleicht rührt der Name der moldauischen Hauptstadt Jassy, gesprochen Jaš, von ihnen her). Im neunten und zehnten Jahrhundert scheinen sie durch die Chasaren und im zwölften und dreizehnten durch die Mongolen nach Süden an den Terek und Kuban, und schließlich im vierzehnten Jahrhundert durch die von der Krim her eindringenden Kabardiner in ihre jetzigen Wohnsitze gedrängt worden zu sein. Ursprünglich waren sie, bzw. die Alanen, ein mächtiges Reitervolk, das den Georgiern, Persern, Byzantinern und Chasaren, Söldnertruppen lieferte, aber durch innere Zwistigkeiten und durch Kämpfe mit den Georgiern und später mit den Kabardinern wurden sie an Zahl stark vermindert und wirtschaftlich und kulturell herabgedrückt, wozu auch die Rauheit und die Unfruchtbarkeit ihres jetzigen Wohngebietes beitrug.

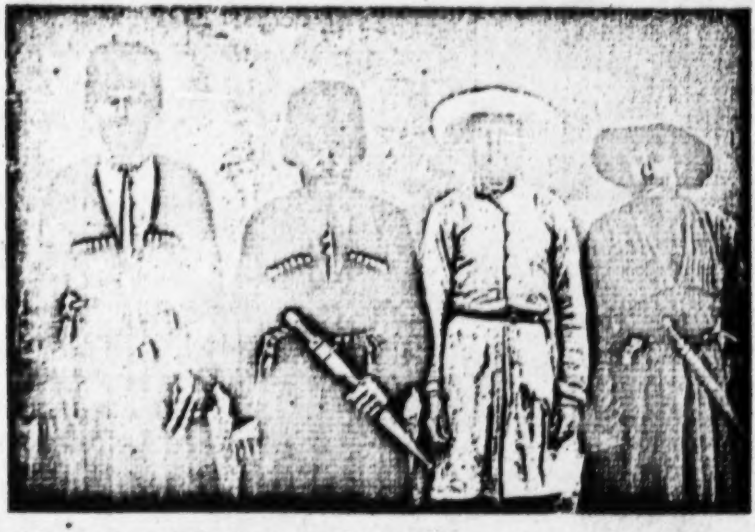


Abb. 477. Tagaurische Osseten aus Tschmi (Phot. A. Dirr)

Abb. 478. Filzstiefel mit Lederbesatz, Ossen (1/6 n. Gr.) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

In ihrer geistigen Veranlagung äußert sich der Einfluß von Umwelt und Nachbarschaft: der Digore und der Tagaure wird als verschlossen, ehrlich und arbeitsam geschildert, der Kurtaline als offenherzig, während der Alagire gutmütig und schwerfällig sein soll.

Von Körperbau sind die Ossen mittelgroß, untersetzt. Der Schädel ist mittellang bis kurz, gewöhnlich flach bis mittelhoch; das Gesicht breit, die Nase groß und gerade, das Kinn kurz und rund, die Lippen schmal. Die Gesichtsfarbe ist hell — Kinder sind oft rotwangig —, die Augen meist blau oder grau, seltener braun, die Haare bei der Mehrzahl blond, rötlich oder hellbraun. Blondheit und Blauäugigkeit scheint im Süden häufiger zu sein als im flacheren Norden, wo wahrscheinlich Mischungen mit dunkelfarbigen Völkern (Leghiern, Kabardinern u. a.) stattgefunden haben. Wegen dieser Hellfarbigkeit von Haaren und Augen, sowie wegen mancher Ähnlichkeiten in der Sprache, im sachlichen und geistigen Besitz (s. u.), nahmen verschiedene Forscher Verwandtschaft mit den Germanen an; jedoch kann man bei näherem Zusehen nur vermuten, daß blonde Elemente, die bei den Nordindogermanen überwogen, vom Norden abgewandert, mit diesem Teil der Iranier verschmolzen und in der Mehrheit blieben; ob germanische Bestandteile, etwa von den Goten u. a., die ja bis in ihre Nähe vordrangen, dazugekommen sind, ist sehr fraglich. Die kulturellen Erscheinungen, die zu derselben Annahme verleiteten, lassen sich teilweise auch bei ihren Nachbarn nachweisen, anderes als altes indogermanisches Erbgut vermuten, während anderes, besonders religiöse Bräuche und Anschauungen, gerade im Gegenteil auf starke Beeinflussung seitens der alteinheimischen Bevölkerung, bzw. Mischung mit ihr hinweisen (s. u. S. 813ff.).

Die Kleidung der Männer (Abb. 477 u. 480) weicht von der im Kaukasus üblichen nicht wesentlich ab; sie besteht aus einem baumwollenen Hemd, einem dunklen Untergewand aus Baumwolle oder Wolle (kurat), darüber einer grauen oder schwarzen Tscherkeska (tsok'a) aus grobem Tuch mit Patronentäschchen auf der Brust, Ledergürtel (rona), engeren oder weiten Hosen (šarovari, šalbar) und dazu bei schlechtem Wetter einem Kapuzenmantel (nimat). Auf dem kahlgeschorenen Kopfe tragen sie im Sommer weiße, weitrandige Filzhüte (chud, chode), im Winter Ziegenfellmützen (papach) und

Abb. 479. Kletterschuh aus Leder, Ossen (1/6 n. Gr.) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

darüber fast immer ein Tuch aus grober Wolle (basłak). An die Beine ziehen sie dicke Wollstrümpfe (mestalt'ă), Ledergamaschen (zengoit'ă) und leichte Sandalen (dzábyrt'ă) aus weichem Leder oder

Abb. 480. Osse und Frau, ein Mehlgefäß tragend (Nach Graf J. Zichy)

Filztuch, dazu auf der Straße Überschuhe mit dicken, aus Bindfaden oder Riemen geflochtenen Sohlen oder zum Bergsteigen Schuhe aus Fell (artă'it'ă) mit Sohle aus Riemengeflecht und Graseinlage (Abb. 478 und 479). Wie andere Kaukasier tragen sie am Gürtel einen Dolch (kata), dazu früher noch Säbel (achsagard), Pistole (dambatsa) — jetzt Revolver (kerrach) und Gewehr (top').

Die Frauenkleidung (s. Abb. 481) ist gewöhnlich rot oder blau. Sie besteht aus weiten Kattunhosen (šarovari), weißem Hemd, langem Untergewand (carnador-chadona) mit weiten Ärmeln, das mit silbernen oder goldenen Borten (bit) und am Halsausschnitt mit silbernen Spangen verziert ist, einem ebenfalls mit Borten und Silberzieraten versehenen Brustlatz oder offenem Jäckchen und einem kurzen Überrock mit engen Ärmeln, über den ein silberbeschlagener Gürtel gelegt wird. An den Füßen tragen sie wie die Männer Wollstrümpfe und Sandalen, auf der Straße Überschuhe. Den Kopf bedecken die Mädchen mit einer karbadinischen Mütze (s. S. 753), die Frauen, gemäß strengem Sittengebot, nach der ersten Geburt mit einem Tuch (narban, fata), und es ist für sie eine schwere Beleidigung und Schmach, wenn man ihnen das Tuch herunterreißt.

Abb. 481. Ossin (Nach R. v. Erckert)

Siedlung und Wohnung. Die Dörfer im Unterland sind teilweise ziemlich ausgedehnt, im Mittelgebirge umfassen sie zwanzig bis dreißig, weiter oben fünf bis sechs Gehöfte, die terrassenförmig an den Berghängen angelegt sind, und im Hochgebirge liegen die burgartigen Gehöfte einzeln verstreut.

Die Häuser an der Nordgrenze Ossiens sind in der Art der tscherkessischen und kosakischen aus Lehm und Flechtwerk gebaut, während im südlichen Unterland Holz, im Gebirge Steine als Baustoff benutzt werden.

Die Häuser im Süden (s. Abb. 482) werden aus Balken mit einem oder zwei Stockwerken errichtet und mit Rinde oder Brettern verschalt. Im Hofe, der von einem Lattenzaun umgeben ist, stehen außer den Wirtschaftsgebäuden kleinere Hütten auf Pfählen mit flachem Dach für die verheiratete Nachkommenschaft. Die Häuser im Oberlande gleichen in Bau und Raumbestimmung den chew-

surischen (s. S. 725); sie lehnen sich an Berghänge an und sind wie die georgischen Hütten zum Teil darin hineingearbeitet. Der Hof (kand) ist mit einer hohen Mauer umbaut, auf deren Ecken öfters kleine Türme sitzen, und in ihm stehen außer Misthaufen, Pflügen (sibirr), Schlitten, Schleifen, Wagen (uardun) und anderen Wirtschaftsgeräten Speicher (gondon) und im Süden kleinere Hütten, davon eine für Gäste, falls kein drittes Geschoß mit Gastzimmer

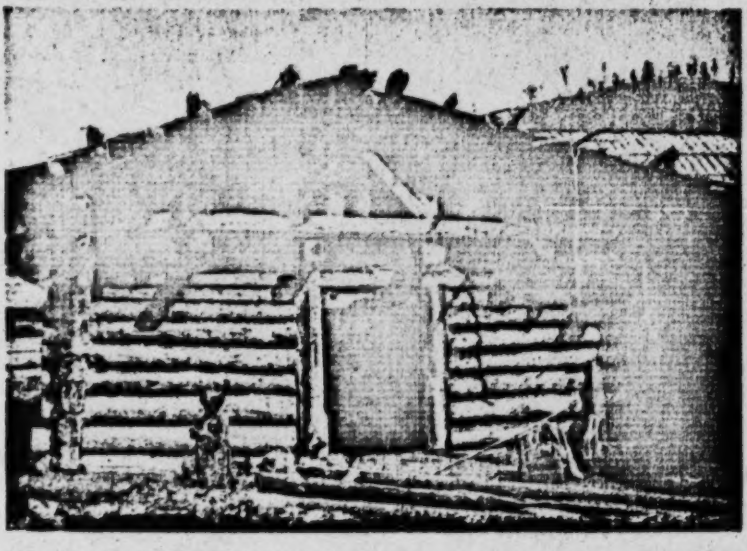


Abb. 482. Tusisches Wohnhaus, Ossen (Phot. A. Dirr)

vorhanden ist. Im Dorfe oder vielerorts auch in jedem Gehöft ragt ein hoher Wehrturm (s. Abb. 484) in der Art der chewsurischen empor.

Der größte Raum, bei zweigeschossigen Häusern im Oberstock, dient als Küche und Wohnzimmer. In der Mitte ist eine Steinplatte für das Herdfeuer in den Estrich eingelassen, über ihr hängt an einem Querbalken (valardigatta) der eiserne oder kupferne Kessel (arrsist) an einer eisernen Kette (rachis); der Rauch zieht durch eine aus Zweigen geflochtene und mit Lehm und Kuhmist beschmierte Röhre oder durch eine steinerne Esse, die das flache, mit Lehm oder Steinen bedeckte, an zwei Seiten offene Dach nur wenig überragt oder unterhalb davon endigt. An zwei Wänden stehen niedrige Bänke (banden) mit Bogenhölzern statt der Füße, auf die sich fast nur die Männer setzen, während die Frauen meist auf dem Boden kauern. Der Sippenälteste aber

benutzt einen besonderen, dreibeinigen Stuhl mit reich geschnitzter Rückenlehne (kalatkin) oder einen Sessel mit Rücken und Armlehnen (darsbandon) oder einen vierbeinigen mit Querleisten statt der Lehnen, oder einfache dreibeinige Hocker (s. Abb. 430). Andere Geräte sind: dreibeinige runde Tische (kachkin), Feuerzangen (artaiskan), Feuerschaufeln (aslan), Bratspieße mit vier langen Spitzen, Backtrog (aring), Butterfaß u. dgl.; auf Wandbrettern neben dem Herd ist allerlei blankgescheuertes Geschirr aus Holz, Kupfer, Ton, Glas aufgestellt, und an den Wänden hängen Kleider, Waffen u. ä.

Im zweiten Zimmer (chossan) steht die Schaukelwiege, und als Betten — im Gegensatz zu anderen Morgenländern — viereckige, beschnitzte Kästen mit Füßen und hohen, durch eine Querleiste verbundene Pfosten an den vier Ecken, welche mit Teppichen und Betten ausgepolstert werden. Aus dem Wohnzimmer führt eine Tür in die Vorratskammer (kabits), worin auch der Hausgeist (safa) wohnt.

Wirtschaftliches. Im Unterlande beschäftigen sich die Osseten vorzugsweise mit Ackerbau. Es herrscht hier das Dreifeldersystem: im ersten Jahre wird auf das frisch gedüngte Feld Weizen oder Mais, im zweiten Gerste gesät, im dritten liegt es brach. Außerdem bauen sie etwas Roggen, Hafer, Hirse (galma), in den Hausgärten (sagaradon) Erbsen, Bohnen, Gurken, Zwiebeln, Lauch, Kartoffeln. Das Getreide wird mit der Sichel, Gras mit der Sense geschnitten. Im Gebirge ist das Ackerland (chugent), das nach Viertelhektaren (bongen = Tagesarbeit, vgl. das deutsche Morgen) gemessen wird, an den Berglehnen sehr knapp und durch Sturzregen und Steinschlag ständig bedroht; Roggen und Gerste sind hier die Hauptfrüchte. Deshalb überwiegt die Viehzucht, besonders werden Schafe gehalten, weniger Ziegen, Pferde und Rinder, obwohl die Kuh noch immer als Wertmesser dient. Das Vieh bleibt im Sommer über Nacht in einem mit einer Steinmauer oder einem Flechtzaun eingehegten Viehhof nebem dem Hause — im Winter im Hausstall —, wo Kühe, Ziegen und Schafe gemolken werden, und wo auch der Mist sorgfältig gesammelt wird, um ihn als Dünger zu verwenden und um Brennziegel daraus zu machen (s. S. 730).

Die Jagd liefert jetzt keinen wesentlichen Beitrag mehr zum Lebensunterhalt, ebensowenig der Fischfang, bei dem sie neben Angeln (einfachen Drahthaken an einer kurzen Schnur aus weißen Roßhaaren und langer Rute) Netze und Reusen verwenden.

Die Männer verrichten die schweren Arbeiten, wie Pflügen, Dreschen, Zimmern, Mauern; ferner fertigen sie hölzerne Geräte an, Pelzmützen, Schuhe, Sättel, Pferdegeschirr u. a. Von Handwerkern finden sich nur Schmiede und Schlosser, Töpferei scheint zu fehlen;

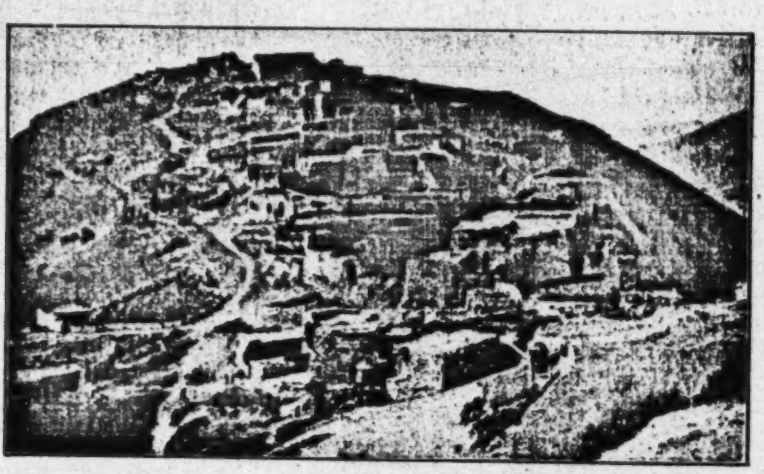


Abb. 483. Kamunta, digorisches Dorf am Aigamugi-don, Nebenfluß des oberen Uruch (Nach M. v. Déchy)

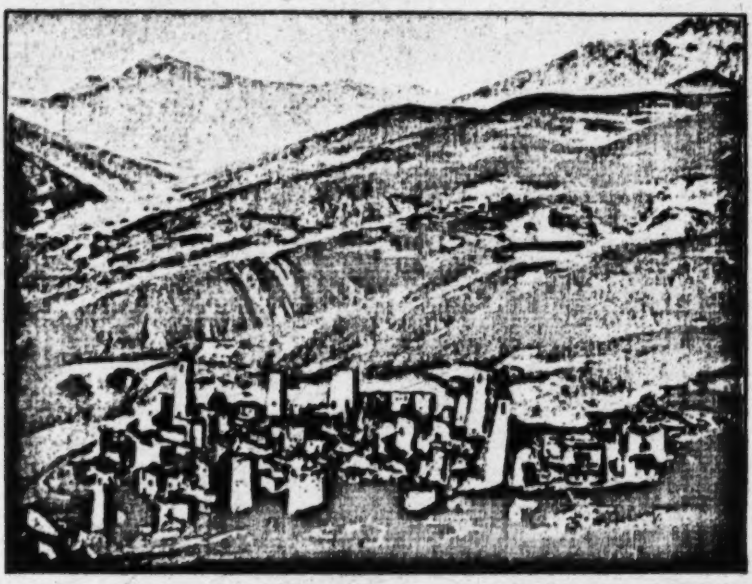


Abb. 484. Dorf Arsi, osetisches Bergland (Nach G. Kloradze)

in waldreichen Gegenden treiben die Männer Holzflößerei und -handel als Nebenerwerb. Die Frauen haben die Hauswirtschaft und das Vieh zu besorgen; sie spinnen (s. Abb. 488,1), weben, machen silberne und goldene Borten, Schnüre und Männerhüte aus weißem, dünnem Filz, holen Brennholz aus dem Walde, Mehl von der Mühle u. a. m. (s. Abb. 480).

Die Nahrung der Osseten besteht hauptsächlich aus Gersten-

Abb. 485. Tagaurische Frauen mit Hausgeräten (Nach G. Kloradze)

und Roggenbrotfladen (tšurek), Milch, Käse, Bohnen- und Maissuppe (basu), allerlei Kräutern, Zwiebeln und Knoblauch in Salzwasser (zachdon), Rettich, rotem Pfeffer. Fleisch wird fast nur an Festtagen verzehrt, meist Schaffleisch, gekocht oder in Stücke geschnitten und am Spieß gebraten (šašlik). Andere Speisen für Festtage oder zur Bewirtung von Gästen sind: Schaffleischsuppe, Brot aus Mais- oder Weizenmehl, das aus dem Unterlande geholt wird, in Butter gerösteter Käse (dzika), runde, mit Käse gefüllte Kuchen (chabišin, achtšin). Dazu trinken sie Gerstenschnaps (araki), Meth (rung), schwarzes, süßes Bier (ludi) und leichtes, helles Bier (bagan) aus Gerste und Hopfen, sowie zwei andere, wohl von den Tataren

übernommene bierartige Getränke: eines aus Hirse oder Roggengrütze (braga) und das andere (buza) aus Brot, Weizen und Malz. Das von den Frauen gebraute Gerstenbier wird wie bei den Chewsuren an Festtagen in Menge getrunken.

Tagsüber ißt man nach Bedürfnis etwas Brot, Käse u. dgl. Die Hauptmahlzeit wird abends eingenommen, zuerst von den Älteren, dann von den Jüngeren. Vor Beginn werden Gebete gesprochen, und beim Essen wird Mäßigkeit und Zurückhaltung gewahrt; darnach wäscht man sich die Hände über einem Becken, das ein Diener reicht. Abweichend von morgenländischem Brauche benutzen sie dabei hölzerne Näpfe, Teller, Löffel, Messer, Gabeln und Tischtücher.

Gesellschafts- und Familienordnung. Die fünf Hauptstämme der Ossen zerfallen in Unterstämme oder Geschlechter und weiter in Dorfgemeinschaften mit einem Ältesten (chetsau) an der Spitze, und diese wiederum setzen sich aus Sippen oder Großfamilien mit einem Hausvater (aldár) als Oberhaupt zusammen. Die Stellung der Frauen und die Ordnung unter ihnen, die im Hause meist in ihrer Abteilung verweilen, ist in gleicher Weise geregelt wie bei den Georgiern.

Abb. 486. Eiserner Ständer mit zwei Lampen und einer Kerzentülle. Ossen an der georgischen Heerstraße (etwa 1/6 n. Gr.)

Bei den Kurtalinen und Alagiren herrscht gesellschaftliche Gleichheit, bei den Tagauren dagegen gab es früher, ähnlich wie bei den Flachlandsgeorgiern, vier Klassen: elf Adelsfamilien (aldar), die sich Sklaven halten durften und das ganze Land besaßen; freie Pachtbauern (farsaglag); Hörige (kavdasar), aus Ehen von Adeligen mit Bauerntöchtern als Nebenfrauen (nomuluos) entsprossen und zum Frondienste verpflichtet; Sklaven (gurdsagi), die verkauft und auch getötet werden durften (bis 1867). Dieselbe Ordnung bestand bei den Digoren, wo die Adeligen „baduliat" hießen.

Ehe. Die Männer heiraten gewöhnlich mit fünfundzwanzig, die Mädchen mit neunzehn Jahren. Die Anbahnung der Ehe geschieht zuerst insgeheim durch eine von den Eltern des Freiers geschickte Frau und dann bei günstiger Antwort öffentlich durch Freiwerber (minnwartar), die Geschenke überbringen. Dann wird die Verlobung durch einen Ausrufer (yark'anak) bekanntgegeben, der Bräutigam zahlt den Kaufpreis (aryat) von hundert bis hundertzwanzig Rubeln, früher Vieh und Waffen, und bei den Brauteltern wird ein Schmaus und Gelage (kaes) abgehalten. Von da an bleibt die Braut bis zur Hochzeit, auch vor dem Bräutigam, verborgen.

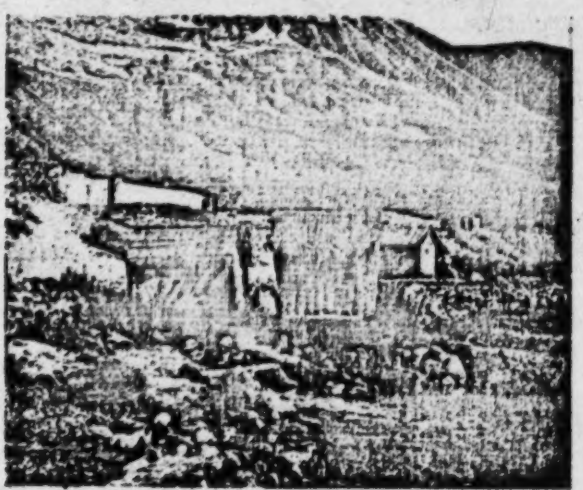


Abb. 487. Turbinenmühle in Dalagkau am Fiagdon (Phot. A. Dirr)

Wenn der Bräutigam am Hochzeitstage mit seinem berittenen, singenden und schießenden Gefolge (kindzgonta) am Brauthaus angelangt ist, läßt er sich, das Gesicht mit einem Tuch bedeckt, zur ältesten der anwesenden Frauen führen, der er zwanzig bis dreißig Rubel und ein Stück Kattun in die Hand gibt, wofür er einen halben Eimer süßen Rotweins, Speisen und Näschereien erhält, die dann sein Gefolge verzehrt. Inzwischen wird die Mitgift ins Haus des Bräutigams gebracht und der Braut ihre gewöhnliche Tracht angelegt, jedoch der Kopf mit einem Tuch, das Gesicht mit einem Schleier (chisa) bedeckt; darauf geleiten sie der Brautführer (anschuargin) und die Brautführerin (dżinarkinmade) zur Kirche, wo der Bräutigam sie erwartet. Nach der Trauung wird sie auf einem mit einem Pferde bespannten Wagen in ihr neues Heim gefahren, wo man sie an der Tür mit Süßigkeiten als Wunschzeichen einer glücklichen und fruchtbaren Ehe überschüttet. Zur Abwehr feindlicher Geister, weswegen auch die Bedeckung der Brautleute geschah, werden auf dem Rückweg Schüsse abgefeuert; beim Eintritt ins Haus halten die Angehörigen des jungen Mannes zu gleichem Zwecke der Neuvermählten Dolche über den Kopf, und aus demselben Grunde

zerbrechen Knaben im Schlafzimmer allerlei Sachen und werfen sie hinaus. Dann muß die junge Frau sich vor dem Herd und der Kesselkette verneigen, den Hausgeist (olar-safa) um Segen bitten und der Hausmutter (äfsïn) zum Zeichen künftigen Gehorsams die Schuhe mit Fett salben. Darauf wird sie vor das Dorf zum heiligen Stein, dem Sitze der Gottesmutter (made-meiram), der Schutzherrin der verheirateten Frauen, geführt, um deren Segen zu erbitten,

Abb. 488. 1 Spindel, ganz aus Holz (aichui) (1/4 n. Gr.); 2 Platte eines dreibeinigen Tisches (1/6 n. Gr.); 3 Kinderlöffel mit Schnittverzierungen (zideg) (1/4 n. Gr.); 4 Hölzerne, beschnitzte Salzbüchse (2/5 n. Gr.)
(1 und 3 Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg, 2 und 4 Museum für deutsche Volkskunde, Berlin)

und schließlich, während die Gäste sich zum Schmaus gesetzt haben, ins Schlafzimmer, das sie drei Tage und Nächte nicht verlassen darf, und wo sie ihr Mann nur heimlich bei Nacht besucht. Nach Verlauf dieser Zeit bringt die Mutter der Frau dem jungen Mann Speisen und Getränke und die Geschenke, die seine Frau für ihn als Braut gearbeitet hat, meist Kleider u. ä., segnet sie beide und läßt von einem Burschen der Frau den Schleier mit einem Bratspieß (chichesan) abnehmen. Das junge Paar beginnt nun das gemeinsame Eheleben.

Abb. 489. Ossischer Dudelsackbläser

und die Frau trägt nicht mehr einen Zopf, sondern drei, einen hinten und je einen zu beiden Seiten des Gesichts (Abb. 480).

Die Geburt eines Knaben wird freudig begrüßt; die Eltern werden beglückwünscht, dem Kinde Flintenkugeln von den Männern in die Wiege gelegt; die Geburt eines Mädchens aber gilt als Mißgeschick. Die Kinder werden bis zu zwei, zuweilen sogar bis zu fünf Jahren gesäugt. Ein- oder zweimal im Monat werden sie gebadet, sonst liegen sie in der Wiege, in deren Boden wie in Turkestan eine Röhre aus Holz oder Knochen eingelassen ist, durch die der Harn ablaufen soll. Die Wöchnerin muß nach der Niederkunft zwei Wochen lang im Hause bleiben, ihr erster Ausgang wird gefeiert. Neben einem christlichen bzw. mohammedanischen Namen gibt man den Kindern noch einen einheimischen, der ihr Rufname bleibt. Männliche Namen sind z. B.: Inaluk (= der Neue), Sau-kuj (= schwarzer Hund), Tsärai (= lebe!), Mairan, Kubadi; weibliche: Sardan (= die Lustige), Daubau, Tsada (= Distel), Kjeba, Surme.

Tod. Wenn ein Mann gestorben ist, wird sein Tod durch den Ausrufer (yark'anak) im Dorfe verkündet. Die Bestattungs- und Trauerbräuche ähneln denen der Chewsuren (s. o. S. 737f.) in bezug auf die Teilnahme des ganzen Dorfes, Totenklage, Klageweiber, Leichenschmaus, Pferderennen. Am dritten Tage wird der Verstorbene in Filz oder Kattun gehüllt und auf einem Brette zum Grabe getragen.

Hier schlagen sich die männlichen Verwandten auf Stirn und Nacken, die weiblichen raufen sich die Haare und zerkratzen sich das Gesicht mit einem Stein, den sie blutbefleckt ins Grab werfen. Die Witwe schneidet sich die Zöpfe ab und legt sie dem Toten auf die Brust, zum Zeichen, daß sie ihm auch im Jenseits angehören wird. Ein alter Priester (bach faldisachu) geht

mit drei Verwandten dreimal um den Toten, preist in einer Rede seine Tugenden und Taten, erzählt vom Totenreich (barastyr) und dem Ritt dahin; dann schlägt er das Pferd des Toten, dessen Hals mit weißem Kaliko, und dessen Rücken mit einer Saffiandecke bedeckt ist, mit den Zöpfen der Witwe, gibt ihm Hirse und Schnaps in einer Schale, die an seinem Huf zerschlagen wird. Dann macht man ihm einen Schnitt ins Ohr, und ein Mann galoppiert mit ihm davon. Kaliko und Satteldecke werden an die Armen verteilt. Nachdem der Priester schließlich noch Schnaps und Brot als Totenopfer gespendet hat, wird der Tote ins Grab versenkt.

Nach der Beerdigung findet der Leichenschmaus statt und im Laufe des Jahres bis zu zwölf Gedächtnisfeiern, wozu alle Leute aus dem eigenen und auch aus Nachbardörfern eingeladen werden. Die Kosten dieser vielen Feiern sind so bedeutend, daß manche Sippe dadurch verarmt, aber die Ehrfurcht vor dem Toten verlangt sie und der Wunsch, daß er im Jenseits heiliges Brot, schwarzes Bier und Schnaps habe und nicht Gras zu fressen brauche. Am Freitag der sechsten Woche nach Neujahr, in der „großen Fastenzeit", in der die „Versammlung der Toten" stattfindet, stellt man eine Puppe, mit den Kleidern des Verstorbenen bekleidet, auf eine Erhöhung, seine Verwandten und Freunde opfern ihm Schnaps und Grütze vom Gedächtnismahl und verweilen die Nacht in Trauer dabei. Die Witwe muß ein Jahr lang fasten, ein grobes, schwarzes Hemd und Kleid tragen und die Dienste verrichten, die sie sonst ihrem Gatten leistete: das Bett zurichten, eine Kerze anzünden, Waschbecken, Krug und Handtuch halten u. a. Jeden Freitag abend begibt sie sich zum Grabe (wie im Balkan), um dem Gatten Speise und Trank zu bringen.

Abb. 490. Särge aus Totenhäusern in Saniba, Ossetien (Phot. A. Dirr)

Ist eine Braut gestorben, dann richten die weiblichen Verwandten die Leiche beim Begräbnis auf dem Friedhof auf, und eine der Frauen entbindet den Bräutigam in deren Namen von dem Verlöbnis und bittet ihn, zu erlauben, daß sie sich im Jenseits einen anderen Bräutigam wähle.

In alter Zeit wurden nur die

Leichen von Frauen begraben, die von Männern wurden in Ochsen- oder Büffelhäute gehüllt an heiligen Bäumen aufgehängt. Jetzt finden sich in Ossien sechs Arten von Gräbern.

Die neueren mohammedanischen Gräber sind durch einen 1¼ bis 1½ m hohen und 60 bis 70 cm breiten aufrecht stehenden Stein gekennzeichnet, auf dessen Vorderseite, ähnlich wie bei den Serben, unten Pferd und Waffen, oben Koransprüche aufgemalt sind. Die christlichen Gräber der Jetztzeit gleichen den russischen, vorher benützte man Totenhäuser, die sich noch an vielen Orten erhalten haben (Abb. 494). Sie sind wie die chewsurischen aus Schieferplatten mit dauerhaftem Mörtel gebaut, 6 bis 8 m hoch, mit Pyramidendach versehen. Im Innern sind an den Längsseiten Balken und Bretter befestigt, auf die die Leichen gelegt wurden; waren die Bretter voll, dann warf man die Leichen in eine in der Mitte befindliche Grube. Eine Abart davon sind die Totenhäuser im westlichen Ossien, die, von islamischer Bauweise beeinflußt, wie die der Kabardiner und Karatschaier gestaltet sind: der Unterbau ist quadratisch, das Dach vielkantig und spitz; die Leichen lagen darin auf der Erde. In anderen Gräbern waren die Leichen mit Steinen bedeckt und darüber — ähnlich den altserbischen Adelssarkophagen — etwa 2½ m lange und 1 m breite Steinkisten errichtet. Bei der letzten Art stehen, wie in Albanien, unbehauene Steine darauf, die ungefähr 3 m hoch, 60 cm breit und 18—30 cm dick sind. Ob diese beiden Arten ossisch, ob sie nicht älteren Ursprungs, ist noch nicht klargestellt.

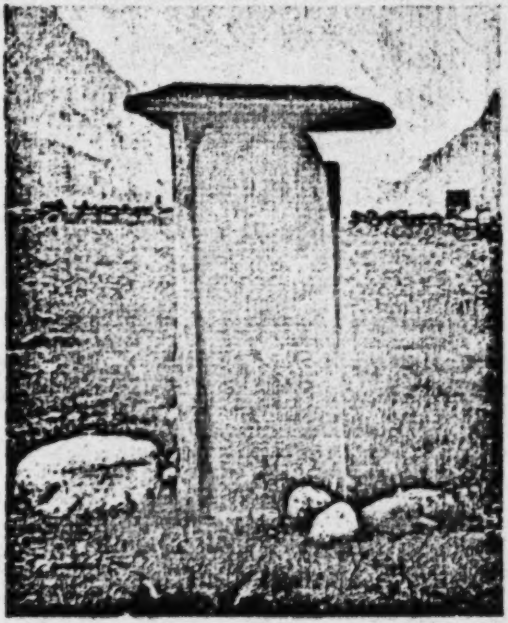


Abb. 491. Ossisches Totenbrett (Phot. A. Dirr)

Glaubensanschauungen und -bräuche. Die Ossen sollen durch König Wachtang Gurgaslan (454 bis 499) zum Christentum bekehrt worden sein, was nicht recht glaubhaft erscheint, da sie damals noch weit nördlicher wohnten. Im zehnten Jahr-

hundert, als sie am Terek, Kuban und an der Malka saßen, vertauschten sie das Christentum auf kurze Zeit mit dem Islam, und das wiederholte sich im fünfzehnten und noch einmal im achtzehnten Jahrhundert unter dem Einfluß der Kabardiner, die im vierzehnten Jahrhundert eingewandert und damals zum Islam übergetreten waren. Seitdem sind ein Teil (1/4 bis 1/5) der westlichen Ossen, besonders die Digoren im Unterland, Mohammedaner.

An vielen Stellen Ossiens finden sich alte Kirchen und Ruinen von ihnen, deren Erbauung wie fast überall der Königin Thamara (1171 bis 1198) zugeschrieben wird (Abb. 496). Es sind aus Steinen ohne Mörtel errichtete Häuschen von etwa 6 bis 8 m Länge und 4 m Breite mit Satteldach, kleiner Tür und einem Fensterloch in der Ostwand; im Innern sind wie in Swanien Gehörne und Geweihe aufgehäuft. Nirgends dagegen sind Reste alter Moscheen vorhanden außer im Westen.

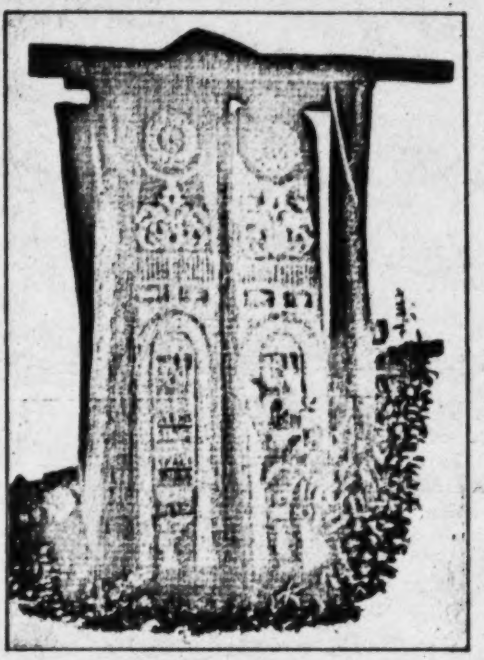


Abb. 492. Ossischer Grabstein neuerer Art, bei Alagir am Ardon (Nach M. v. Déchy)

Die Kirchen stehen vielfach neben oder an Stelle alter Heiligtümer (dzuar), wo, wie in Chewsurien, religiöse Feste gefeiert, Ehen eingesegnet, Opfer dargebracht, Beratungen abgehalten werden, Bedrohte Schutz finden.

So steht bei der dem heiligen Elias (Vatsilja) und der Maria (Mariam) geweihten Kirche bei Bagiai ein solches: ein großer Haufen Steine, darauf eine hohe Stange mit einem weißen Tuch und daneben einige Stöcke; davor eine lange Reihe paralleler Steinsitze und zwischen ihnen Steinplatten als Tische.

Das angesehenste Heiligtum Rekom (s. Abb. 497) unweit des Zeigletschers ist ein Bohlenhaus mit weit vorspringendem Satteldach, das beiderseits von je vier Säulen gestützt wird; über der kleinen eisernen Tür sind ein eisernes Kreuz mit geschweiften Armen und einige Glocken mit georgischer Inschrift angebracht. Eine niedrige Steinmauer umgibt das Heiligtum und einen Vorhof. Neben dem Hause liegen Wisent- und andere Gehörne als erste Beute von Jägern, Gefäße, Bleikugeln, Pfeile, Lanzenspitzen u. a. und auch im Innern viele Pfeile, Heiligenbilder, Räucherfässer, Kerzen, Schmuck, Gehörne, Geweihe, Teppiche u. a. (Abb. 500). In der Nähe befinden sich zahlreiche Unterkunftshütten aus Steinen mit Bretterdach für die Wallfahrer, die hier vom ersten Sonnabend im Mai an zwei Wochen lang verweilen, opfern, schmausen, tanzen und singen.

Abb. 493. Alte ossische Grabsäulen bei Alagir am Ardon (Nach M. v. Déchy)

Außerdem haben die Ossen wie die Gebirgsgeorgier, Tscherkessen, Abchasen auch heilige Haine (idavog), aus denen außer den Priestern niemand Holz holen darf; Vorübergehende legen Holz als Opfergabe nieder oder hängen Fäden an die Zweige gewisser Bäume. In dem Haine Dzuare-yade (= Kreuzwald) bei Abanokau in der Trussoschlucht opfern die dortigen Ossen dem heiligen Elias Schafe, verzehren das Fleisch und hängen die Felle an die Bäume. Sie glauben, daß der mit Blindheit vom heiligen Elias gestraft wird, der hier Holz fällt, und daß er nur durch das Opfer eines Ochsen sein Augenlicht wieder erlangen könne.

Auch einzelne Bäume gelten für heilig, und Frauen dürfen sie ebensowenig berühren wie in die Haine und Heiligtümer eintreten. So werden vor einem Baum bei Styr-Digor, in den ein eisernes Kreuz eingewachsen ist, Opfer dargebracht, und an einem hohlen Baume auf dem Berge Tatar-Tun bei Elchot, in denen die Ossen Zeugfetzen, Geld u. dgl. als Opfer legen, wird in jedem Sommer ein eine Woche währendes Fest gefeiert. Auch wird unterhalb der Höhle des heiligen Elias (Vatsilja-legete) am Lamardon, die große Verehrung genießt, und von der man Wunderdinge erzählt, in jedem Sommer ein großes Fest abgehalten, wobei dem heiligen Elias Bier, Schafe und Ochsen geopfert werden, und der Priester die Erscheinungen und Vorbedeutungen berichtet, die ihm in der Höhle zuteil wurden.

Abb. 494. Ossische Totenhäuser (Phot. A. Dirr)

Wie schon aus dem bisher Gesagten hervorgeht, haben Christentum und Islam nur sehr oberflächlich auf die Anschauungen der Ossen eingewirkt und deren Kern nicht berührt. Die sich Christen Nennenden gehen wohl zur Kirche, halten die christlichen Fasten und Feste ein, sprechen von Gott, Christus und manchen Heiligen, und die Mohammedaner führen die Waschungen aus, fasten am Ramasan und haben den Freitag als Feiertag, aber daneben halten sie fest an der Verehrung ihrer alten Gottheiten und Geister, ihrer Heiligtümer und an ihren eigenen Bräuchen.

Der höchste Gott Chutsau der Ossen, der in allen Gebeten mit angerufen wird, wohnt im Himmel; er ist der Herr über Gutes und Böses und entsendet es durch seine Boten. Barastür ist der Totenrichter, Amon bewacht den Weg vom Paradies zur Hölle, und Kurdalegon ist der himmlische Schmied, der die Rosse der Toten beschlägt. Andere sind Naturgeister, wie Machamath, der Sohn der Sonne, Chemethan, der Sohn des Mondes, Buduri-isad, der Schutzherr der Felder, Chualerdar, der Gott der Ernte, Talvari, der Schützer des Viehes, Ävsuti, der Herr des Jagdwildes, besonders der Hirsche, Steinböcke, Bergziegen und Wildschweine; Tutyr, der Herr der Wölfe, Dubütür, der Schutzherr der Gewässer, der Fische

und der Fischer, Runibara, der Gott der Gesundheit, Saureg-genar, der Herr der Räuber. Andere sind mit christlichen Heiligen verquickt worden, so ist außer der unbestimmten Gestalt des Sohnes Gottes (K'iriste) der heilige Georg (Vastirdżi, Vaskörguj) die volkstümlichste Gottheit, der Beschützer der Wanderer und der Wege; der heilige Theodor (Tutir) der Beschützer der Schafe, Nikolaus der Wundertäter, der heilige Elias (Vatailja) der Herr über Blitz und Donner wie bei den Russen.

Von jemand, der vom Blitz erschlagen wurde, glauben die Osseten, daß er vom heiligen Elias erschossen sei, weil er ihn beleidigt habe. Verwandte und Freunde tanzen um den Toten und hüten sich zu klagen, um den heiligen Elias nicht dadurch zu erzürnen. Dann wird er am Ort des Todes begraben oder dort, wohin ihn zwei Böcke auf einem zweirädrigen Wagen gezogen haben; am Grabe wird ein schwarzer Bock geschlachtet, und sein Fell auf einer langen Stange aufgehängt.

Abb. 495. Seelenhahn aus weißem Kattun mit roten Bändern, Schwanz und Flügel aus Papier, aus einem Grab in Chad am Sadon, westlichem Nebenfluß des Ardon (etwa 1/3 n. Gr.) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

Ahnengeister sind Safa, der Hausgeist und Schutzherr des Herdfeuers, und Fazbaden, der Schutzherr der Sippe. Die Ahnen, die Seelen der Verstorbenen scheut und ehrt man und bietet ihnen alles, was sie im Leben brauchten, damit sie über das Wohl ihrer Sippe wachen und sie fördern. Man errichtet für sie im Walde in der Nähe von Quellen Hütten und stellt eine Bank und ein Bett hinein, damit die Seelen darauf ruhen können; ein- oder zweimal jährlich hält man dort zu Ehren der Toten einen Schmaus ab und läßt für sie Speisen und Getränke zurück.

Von der Seele glauben die Osseten, daß ein Gericht von sechs Männern im Jenseits beschließt, ob sie den Körper, wenn er krank ist, verlassen soll; im Falle der Bejahung erscheint der Tod in der Gestalt eines Wolfes, und der Kranke stirbt. Die Seele schwebt dann über der Leiche, so lange sie im Hause liegt, fährt bei der Bestattung wieder in den Körper, der sich im Grabe noch dreimal aufrichtet, und fliegt dann durch sieben Ringe ins Jenseits, wo sie der Totenrichter (Barastür) ins Paradies (dzenete) oder in die Hölle (zindone) verweist. Im Jenseits nimmt sie wieder die Gestalt eines Menschen an und lebt wie ein solcher; wenn sie alt geworden, verjüngt sie sich durch das Verzehren von Fleisch (wswar) vom Drachen Ruimon. Der heilige Elias befreit die

Menschen auf der Erde von diesem blindgeborenen Drachen, von dessen Gebrüll sie erkranken und sterben; er fesselt ihn mit einer Kette, zieht ihn damit nach oben, und dort hauen himmlische Geister mit Schwertern Fleischstücke von ihm ab, aus denen die Seelen sich „Wawar" kochen.

Wenn bei einem Heiligtum oder Fest ein blutiges Opfer dargebracht wird, faßt der älteste Mann das gemästete Opfertier (nivondow), Rind, Ziege oder Schaf, zunächst am linken Horn, brennt ihm unter Gebet mit einer glühenden Kohle auf die Schnauze und hinter das rechte Ohr ein Kreuz, gießt Schnaps ins Feuer, trinkt selbst davon und nach ihm ein Knabe. Dann wird das Tier von zwei Burschen geschlachtet, das Blut aufgefangen und verscharrt. Das Fleisch wird in einem Kessel gekocht und beim Festschmaus verzehrt; ein Stück gekochte Lunge wirft der Älteste mit Fett und Kuchen (täiri) zusammen ins Feuer. Die Knochen werden darnach an der Opferstätte zusammengelegt, und der Kopf des Opfertieres an einem Baum oder an einer Stange aufgehängt.

Abb. 496. Ossische Kirche in Nusal am Ardon
(Nach G. Nioradze)

Außer den christlichen Feiertagen der georgischen Kirche bzw. des Islam, begehen die Osseten ihre alteinheimischen Feste zu Ehren der obenerwähnten Gottheiten; darunter sind „männliche", das heißt solche, die nur von Männern mit blutigen Opfern, und „weibliche", die von Frauen mit Milchopfern gefeiert werden.

Den Gott der Ernte Chualerdar bittet man vor der Ernte (kuft) um Bewahrung der Schnitter vor Verletzungen. Sein Haupt-

fest findet im Herbst statt. Dabei wird dem Hausvater zunächst eine zentnerschwere Garbe aus Hirse, Gerste, Roggen und Weizen gebracht, die er nach den Fruchtarten auseinandernehmen und daraus Schnaps, Schwarzbier, Grützbier usw. bereiten läßt. Beim Schmaus, für den Geflügel, Schafe und Ochsen geschlachtet werden, streut die Hausmutter einige Körner aus und bittet den Gott um viel Hirse und Vertreibung von Ratten und Mäusen.

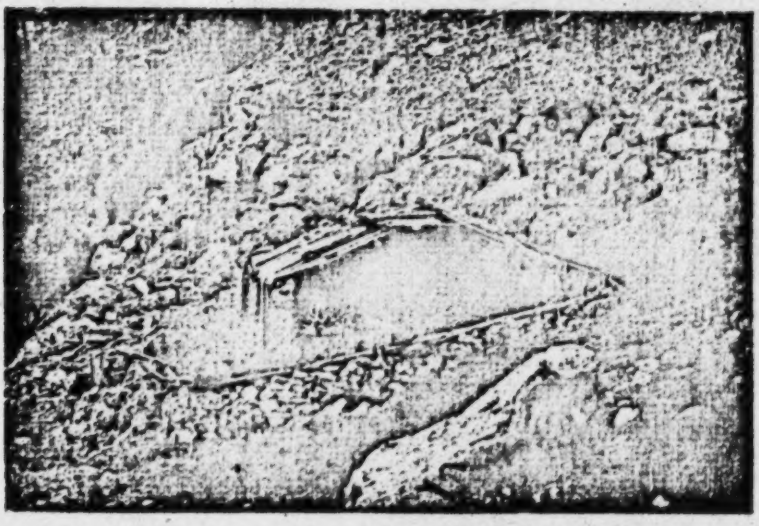


Abb. 497. Nationalheiligtum der Ossen am oberen Zeja-Bach
(Phot. A. Dirr)

Zum Feste des Hausgeistes (giniata) wird ein Bock geschlachtet und sein Blut vergraben. Um Mitternacht sprechen die Männer in der Scheune Dankgebete und bitten den Schutzgeist um Segen im nächsten Jahre; darnach trinken sie Hirsebier (kumal) und essen Schnitte von Bocksleber (achsarfanbas), die gekocht und zu je fünf, sieben oder zwölf in Eingeweidefett gewickelt und an einem Stöckchen geröstet worden waren. Darauf findet im Hause das Festmahl statt.

Am Neujahrsvorabend, am letzten oder vorletzten Freitag im Dezember, sitzt die ganze Sippe am Herdfeuer, und der Hausvater betet, dankt Gott für das vergangene und bittet um Segen im neuen Jahr. In der Nacht ziehen die Kinder im Dorfe umher,

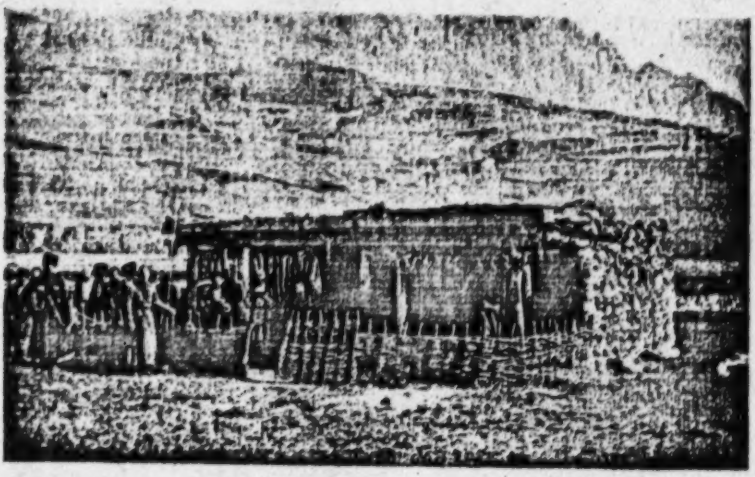


Abb. 498. Ossisches Versammlungs-, Fest- und Bethaus, Dargavs
(Phot. A. Dirr)

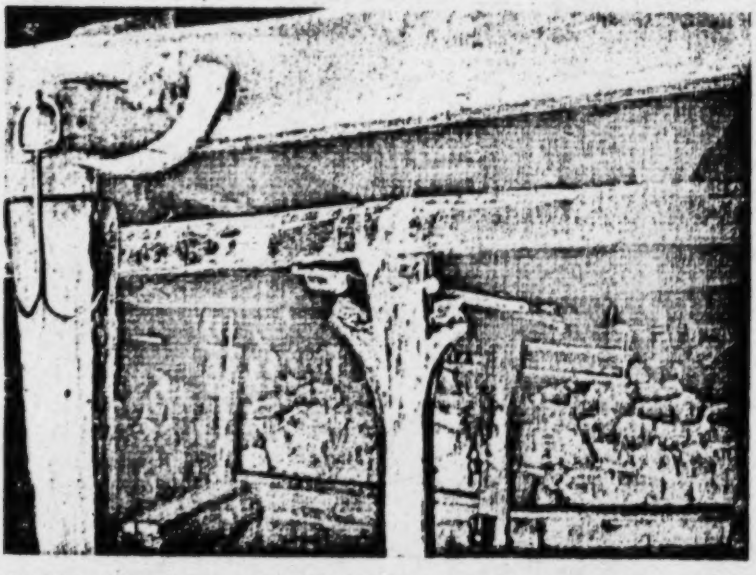


Abb. 499. Festgelageraum im Dzivgisdzar (Phot. A. Dirr)

[f. 819]

werfen die Körner in die Häuser und singen, daß Gott viel Glück geben möge, einen Sohn, Gesundheit, Erntesegen, Jagdglück u. dgl. Der Schluß dieser Lieder „Haltet uns nicht auf, wir müssen noch in andere Häuser gehen" erinnert an die bei uns gebräuchlichen. Am Neujahrsmorgen zündet der Hausvater ein Strohfeuer auf dem Hofe an, damit seine Eltern das ganze Jahr im Jenseits davon

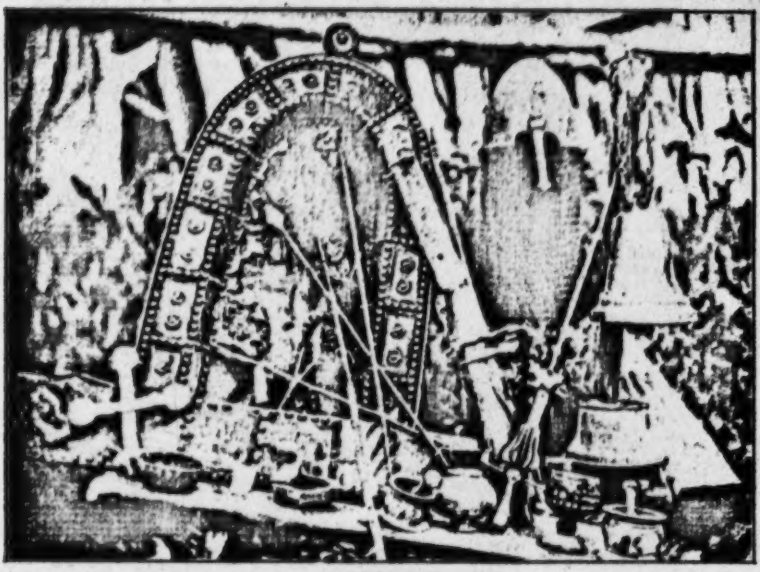


Abb. 500. Opfergaben im Heiligtume Rekom (Nach G. Kieradze)

genügend haben. Tagsüber wird dann getanzt, gesungen, getrunken und geschmaust, wobei es unter anderem große Kuchen (deda) und Gebäck in Form von Rädern, Pflügen, Eggen usw. gibt, damit diese Geräte der Sippe Ernteglück bringen.

Am Mittwochabend zwischen Weihnacht und Neujahr schlachtet der Hausvater vor der Tür für den Gott des Bösen ein Lamm und bittet ihn, daß er das Opfer, Speise und Trank annehme, ihm Vieh und Besitz nicht raube, seiner Sippe kein Leid tue, sondern daß er seine Macht nicht ausüben und verschwinden möge. Lunge und Hals des Tieres werden gebraten, das Fleisch gekocht; von diesem legt der Hausvater, nachdem die übrigen sich entfernt haben, ein Stück auf den Tisch, unter einen Mantel, und man glaubt, daß der Gott davon ißt. Das Fleisch wird in der Nacht beim Festmahl verzehrt, und die Knochen werden in eine Grube geworfen, die der Hausvater vor

der Tür gegraben hatte. Um den bösen Geist nicht zu reizen, vermeidet man dabei, den Namen des höchsten Gottes auszusprechen. Dieser Brauch und der Glaube an diese Gottheit weisen auf iranischen Ursprung hin.

„Weiblich" ist das Fest der Maria, welches die Mädchen gegen Ende des Herbstes bei einer alten Frau feiern. Das älteste von den Mädchen bittet den höchsten Gott und „Allarde" um einen Freier, Schutz vor Krankheit und bösen Weibern, und darauf nehmen alle einen von den bereitstehenden Kuchen, aus deren Füllung sie den Beruf ihres künftigen Mannes erkennen: Korn bedeutet einen Ackerbauer, Käse einen Viehbesitzer u. dgl.

Abb. 501. Ossische Trinkgefäße: 1 Schnapsgefäß (Ziegenhorn) aus dem Dzuar Gulikau (žed) (1/7 n. Gr.); 2 Hölzerne Biertasse (kus) (1/5 n. Gr.); 3 Hölzerne Biertasse, Zwillingsgefäß, aus dem Dzuar Gulikau (1/5 n. Gr.); 4 Hölzerne Biertasse (kusgen) (1/5 n. Gr.) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

Die Verehrung des Gottes der Gesundheit (Runibara) ist auch Sache der Frauen. Wenn ein Kranker wieder gesundet ist, gehen die Frauen von seiner und von benachbarten Sippen zu einem heiligen Baum, wo die älteste von ihnen Käsekuchen niederlegt und ihn, heilige Lieder singend, mit Milch begießt. Darnach verzehren sie die Kuchen und einen gedörrten Stör (kaf), der zuvor über dem Kopfe des Kranken gehängt hatte. Als Weihegabe binden sie durchlochte Silbermünzen an den Baum; wer sie stiehlt, den wird nach der Meinung der Ossen dieselbe Krankheit befallen.

Wenn ein Kind an Pocken erkrankt ist, bitten die Mutter und ihre Freundinnen, drei Brotfladen mit brennendem Weihrauch über dessen Bett haltend, die Pockengeister (alaurdi) um Heilung und

versprechen ihnen im Lied, das sie dabei singen, Käsekuchen, Stieropfer, schwarzes Bier, silberne Flügel u. a.

Böse Geister, die Haus und Hof schädigen könnten, schreckt man wie in Makedonien durch Pferdeköpfe und Knochen ab, die an der Hofmauer oder am Zaun aufgehängt werden. Kinder und Vieh sucht man gegen böse Geister — der Glaube an den „bösen Blick" scheint nicht vorhanden zu sein — durch Amulette zu schützen (s. Abb. 502); so hängt man Kindern z. B. Säckchen mit Wolle, Eisen und Mohn um.

Abb. 502.
Amulett für Opferochsen, Ossen
(2/5 n. Gr.)
(Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

Rechtsanschauungen und -bräuche. Die Grundzüge des ossischen Gewohnheitsrechtes sind dieselben wie in dem der Gebirgsgeorgier. Anstatt der Blutrache kann ein Vergleich (berdzchali) mit Hilfe eines Schiedsrichters (terchoneleg) geschlossen werden; das Blutgeld (kan-algan) wird nach Stand, Geschlecht und Alter verschieden bemessen. Mord kann auch auf andere Weise gesühnt werden: durch Gottesurteil, indem ein durch das Los bestimmtes männliches Mitglied, selbst ein Knabe, aus der Sippe des Ermordeten einmal auf den Mörder schießen darf; oder durch Faldisandsunag, das heißt: der Täter wird am Grabe des Toten diesem im Leben und im Jenseits als Sklave geweiht und verliert alle Rechte, eine Schmach, die ein freier Osse kaum auf sich nehmen wird. Bei Elternmord wird der Täter mit seiner Familie in seinem Hause verbrannt und sein gesamter Besitz verwüstet. Totschlag aus Fahrlässigkeit oder in Notwehr und Tötung eines Diebes werden wie Verwundungen, die man nach Körperteil und Schwere verschieden hoch abschätzt, durch Buße gesühnt; Vieh und Gerstenkörner sind dabei auch hier Maßeinheiten (vgl. S. 747). Raub an Stammesfremden gilt nicht als Verbrechen und wird nur gesühnt, wenn der Geschädigte den Täter kennt. Ein ertappter Dieb darf beliebig lange geprügelt werden, oder er muß das Gestohlene fünffach ersetzen. Entführung eines Mädchens wird durch Heirat und Kaufgeld gesühnt, die einer Frau sowie Verführung ist in gleicher Höhe wie Mord zu büßen.

Katze und Hund werden in ähnlicher Weise verwendet wie bei den Chewsuren und ebenso der Esel. Wenn jemand eine Forderung nicht eintreiben oder für eine Beleidigung keine Sühne erhalten kann, schlachtet er eines von jenen Tieren auf dem Grabe der Ahnen des Schuldners oder Beleidigers; die Seelen der Ahnen sind dann im Jenseits von der Schmach bedroht, von diesem Tier gepeinigt zu werden, was kein Osse zulassen, sondern lieber sofort Zahlung oder Buße leisten wird. — Bei Diebstahl wendet sich der Osse an einen Zauberer (kurismetsok), der dann mit einer Katze zu dem Hause des vermutlichen Diebes oder mangels eines bestimmten Verdachtes im Dorfe umhergeht, um damit anzudeuten, daß dem Diebe ein gleiches, wie eben erwähnt, drohe; darauf wird der Dieb das Gestohlene unweigerlich zurückbringen. Beim Eid faßt der Osse einen Hund am Schwanz oder einen Esel am Ohr; schwört er falsch, müssen die Seelen seiner Ahnen und seiner Angehörigen solche Tiere im Jenseits verzehren.

Nach dem Tode des Vaters wird das Erbe unter die Söhne gleichmäßig verteilt, nur zwei erhalten ein Voraus: der älteste das Haus und etwas Vieh, und der jüngste ebenfalls etwas Vieh und Waffen. Die Töchter erhalten nichts, vielmehr fließt bei ihrer Verheiratung das Kaufgeld ihren Brüdern zu. Ist der älteste Sohn noch unmündig, verwaltet die Mutter einstweilen das Vermögen. Hat die Witwe keine Kinder oder nur Töchter, behält sie es noch ein Jahr bis zur Gedächtnisfeier, dann muß sie es an den nächsten männlichen Verwandten des Verstorbenen abtreten, der sie unterhält, falls sie nicht vom Vater oder Bruder ihres Mannes geheiratet wird, was früher als Pflicht galt. Kinder, die aus dieser neuen Ehe oder unehelich geboren werden, gelten als die des Verstorbenen, erben seinen Namen und von seinem Vermögen, da die Frau zur Mannessippe gehört.

b) Andere Iranier, Inder u. a.

Von den im letzten Jahrhundert eingewanderten Angehörigen europäischer Völker haben nur die Russen als herrschende Schicht einigen Einfluß auf die Gestaltung des geistigen Lebens und des Sachbesitzes der Kaukasier ausgeübt; hingegen haben die Kosaken am Kuban und Terek infolge friedlicher und feindlicher Berührung mit Tscherkessen, Abchasen und Tataren manches von diesen angenommen.

Abb. 508. Persische Fruchthändler in Baku

Von den asiatischen Indogermanen haben die Armenier (s. Bd. II, 1, S. 398 ff.), einen wesentlichen Anteil an der geistigen Entwicklung der Flachlandsgeorgier (s. S. 675) gehabt, und körperliche Verwandtschaft oder Mischung zwischen beiden oder, besser gesagt: des völkischen Grundstockes der Vorderasiaten mit südlichen und östlichen Altkaukasiern, bis zu den Tschetschenen im Nordosten tritt an manchen Orten augenfällig hervor (s. S. 774f.).

Was die Iranier anbelangt, so sind die Kurden (s. Bd. II, 1, S. 400 ff.) wohl erst verhältnismäßig spät mit Georgiern in Berührung gekommen, haben jedenfalls keine Einwirkung von ihnen erfahren oder auf sie ausgeübt, höchstens auf ihre gurischen Nachbarn. Die Sekte der Jesiden, die auch hinsichtlich ihrer Glaubenslehre den Kurden in manchen Stücken nahestehen, hat sich in einigen Orten des südlichsten Kaukasiens niedergelassen (s. Bd. II, 1, S. 403 f.).

Wesentlich anders verhält es sich mit den Persern (s. Bd. II, 1, S. 405 ff.), die seit den ältesten Zeiten teils unmittelbar durch Verkehr oder Besetzung, teils mittelbar über Armenien und später durch die Tataren auf das südliche und östliche Kaukasien in bezug auf Geistesbildung, Kunst, Kriegswesen u. a. stark eingewirkt haben. Als Grenzmal ihrer Macht hat sich bis heute die große steinerne Mauer erhalten, die sich von der Völkerpforte am Kaspischen Meer, von der Stadt

Derbend (persisch = Torverschluß, tatarisch Demir-kapú = eisernes Tor, arabisch Bâb-el-abwâb = Tor der Tore) nach Westen zu 60—70 km weit ins Gebirge hinaufzieht. Sie ist vom Sassanidenkönige Chosrau Anôšarvân (531—579 n. Chr.) zum Schutz gegen die Einfälle der Chasaren und Alanen, gegen die schon sein Vater Kobad (491—531) eine Mauer aus Lehmziegeln gebaut hatte, errichtet und durch zahlreiche Türme und kleine Burgen (kalé) verstärkt worden. Die Verteidigung der Mauer vertraute Chosrau außer einheimischen Stämmen vor allem iranischen Ansiedlern an, die er aus Persien und aus dem Land Sogd, das ist Charesmien und Samarkand, dahin übergeführt hatte. Nachkommen dieser Siedler scheinen die Einwohner der Landschaft Kaitach, die Tabassaraner, zu sein, deren Namen vielleicht aus Tabor-i-Chorassan (= Schar, Leute aus Chorassan) zusammengezogen ist, sowie die Tât zwischen Baku, Kuba und dem Babadagh und bei Derbend. Die ersteren dürften also aus einer Mischung von Lesghiern mit Iraniern (vgl. S. 674f.) hervorgegangen sein, demgemäß werden sie von den Tataren âzade chalch' oder chelaiq (= freies Volk) wie alle Lesghier genannt im Gegensatz zu den Tât, die raijat chelaiq (= unfreies Volk) heißen. Ihr Name wird mit dem der mittelasiatischen Tadschik (s. B. II, 1, S. 412 ff.) in Verbindung gebracht, und ihre Sprache steht dem Neu-

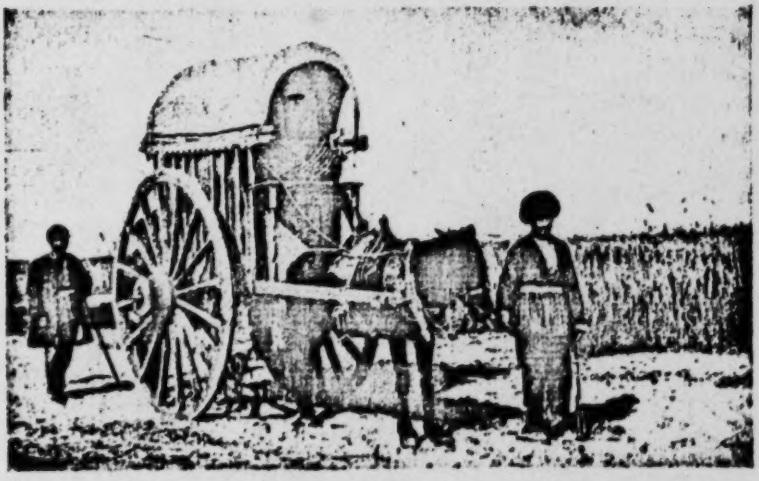


Abb. 504. Zweirädriger Karren, Gegend von Baku

persischen nahe; sie wird auch von den Bergjuden im Daghestan und am Terek gesprochen. Auf ihren alten Friedhöfen und bei ihren Dörfern sind vereinzelte Reste von Bauten zu finden, die auf früheres Christentum hinweisen. Ihre Verwandten, die Talysch im feuchtheißen Lenkoran am Kaspischen Meer, von Aserbeidschaner Tataren umschlossen, sprechen eine andere Abart des Neupersischen, die viel Altpersisches enthalten soll.

Ein Rest der Altperser, Anhänger der Lehre des Zoroaster oder Zerduscht, die Gebern, waren noch in der ersten Hälfte des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts in der Ebene von Surachane oder Ateschga (= Feuerland) bei Baku ansässig, wo ein Tempel stand, in dem sie das von einer Gasquelle genährte ewige Feuer verehrten. Sie waren hierher aus Persien übergesiedelt, nachdem sie von dort vertrieben und ihr Haupttempel auf einem Berg bei Jesd zerstört worden war; sie starben allmählich aus, und an ihrer Stelle waren schließlich hindusprechende Glaubensgenossen als Wächter des Heiligtums getreten.

Indischer Herkunft sind auch die wenigen Zigeuner, die im südlichen Kaukasien wandern und armenische Zigeuner (Boša) genannt werden; ihre Sprache ist im Bau westarmenisch, der Wortschatz verschiedener Herkunft.

5. Semitische Völker

Die Sekte der Nestorianer oder Chaldäer (s. Bd. II, 1, S. 404 f.) hat einige Niederlassungen in der Karajasteppe an der Kura und in Tiflis; sie sind aus Persien eingewandert, von wo sie 1827 vertrieben worden waren. Die Perser nannten sie Nasran, die Armenier Aissoren; sie sprechen persisch, beim Gottesdienst aber wird das Aramäische gebraucht. Die Frauentracht ähnelt der jesidischen (s. Bd. II, 1, Abb. 270).

Die Araber, welche im achten Jahrhundert in Kaukasien eingedrungen waren und sich da niedergelassen hatten — 24 000 (?) arabische Familien aus Syrien und aus dem Zweistromlande soll Muslimeh ben Abdul Malik, der 733 nach Derbend kam, in Tabasaran angesiedelt haben —, sind vollständig in den Lesghiern und Tschetschenen aufgegangen (s. S. 774). Man trifft aber zuweilen Leute, die sich noch jetzt ihrer arabischen Abstammung rühmen.

Bergjuden

Die Zahl der Bergjuden (Dagh-Tšufut) soll gegen 30 000 betragen (mit den aus Rußland in den letzten Jahrzehnten eingewanderten Juden zusammen 120 000). In Südkaukasien sprechen sie georgisch, im Osten und Norden tatarisch.

Im siebenten und sechsten Jahrhundert v. Chr. ließen sich Angehörige des Volkes, das sich in Palästina Hebräer und Israeliten nannte und offenbar in Nordsyrien aus Vorderasiaten mit semitischem Einschlag hervorgegangen ist, nach der Umwälzung, die der iranische Vorstoß, bzw. die sogenannte babylonische Gefangenschaft u. a. bewirkt hatte, weiter nördlich in Armenien und Kleinasien nieder, wo sie in den letzten Jahrhunderten vor und in den ersten nach Christi Geburt eine gewisse Rolle spielen. In den griechisch-skythischen Städten Südrußlands sind sie von 100 v. bis 300 n. Chr. inschriftlich nachweisbar, und es ist nicht ausgeschlossen, daß die Karaim (s. S. 869) zum Teil die Nachkommen von diesen Juden sind.

Ein anderer Zweig dieses Volkes hatte sich in Persien oder Medien niedergelassen und sich dort mit Iraniern gemischt. Von da verbreiteten sie sich weiter längs der Westküste des Kaspischen Meeres und kamen, wie es scheint, teilweise als Kriegsgefangene gegen 750 zu den Chasaren, unter denen es damals neben Heiden auch Mohammedaner gab (vgl. die Verhältnisse im alten Turfan, s. Bd. II, 1, S. 345). Durch sie wurde ein Teil der Chasaren veranlaßt, zum Judentum überzutreten (andere wurden gegen Mitte des neunten Jahrhunderts zum Christentum bekehrt), und die Juden gewannen einen so großen Einfluß, daß hundert Jahre später auch der Chagan ihren Glauben annahm, und sein Reich galt fortan als jüdisches, bis es 966 vom Waringer Swjatoslaw von Kiew zerstört wurde.

Von diesen in Medien ansässig gewordenen Juden, die dort die iranische Sprache angenommen hatten, wanderten nach der Mitte des achten Jahrhunderts eine größere Schar im Gefolge der Araber in den Daghestan und die Tschetschnja ein, wo eine Anzahl von Ortsbezeichnungen mit dem Zusatz tšufut (= jüdisch) noch von ihrer einstigen Anwesenheit zeugt. Die in Medien zurückgebliebenen sollen später zu Mohammedanern geworden, und aus ihnen angeblich die Tat hervorgegangen sein (vgl. o. S. 825). Von den ins kaukasische Gebirge eingewanderten tatisch sprechenden Juden wohnen die meisten in Madschalis in der Landschaft Kaitach, südlich von Batalpaschinsk, am Kuban und am Terek, im Bezirk Baku, die georgisch sprechenden im Bezirk Jelisavetpol.

Im Körperbau ähneln die Bergjuden mehr den Nordkaukasiern als den europäischen Juden, den Sephardim und den Aschkenasim. Sie sind von schlanker, mittelgroßer bis hoher Gestalt, haben breite Schultern, vorstehende Backenknochen, Adlernase, dunkelbraune Hautfarbe, schwarze Haare und Augen, kräftigen Bartwuchs. Die Frauen haben längliches rundes Gesicht mit weicheren Zügen und von hellerer Farbe, spitze Nase, schmale Schultern, langes schwarzes Haar.

Die Männer tragen die im Kaukasus weitverbreitete tscherkessische Kleidung: Hemd mit Stehkragen (beśmet), langen Überrock aus Tuch ohne Kragen mit Patronenbehältern auf der Brust, schmalen Gürtel mit silbernen oder goldenen Zieraten, an dem vorn ein Dolch in silberner oder lederner Scheide hängt, Fellmütze, Hosen, Gamaschen, leichte Lederschuhe oder eisenbeschlagene Bergschuhe.

Abb. 505. Bergjude
(Phot. E. V. Adler)

Die Tracht der Frauen besteht aus Hemd, weiten Hosen aus Seiden- oder Baumwollstoff, mit Goldborten benähtem Atlasrock, der im Winter wattiert ist, sackförmiger, beiderseits offener Mütze (vgl. S. 873), wollenen Strümpfen, spitzen Schuhen aus rotem oder gelbem Leder. – Von Schmucksachen haben sie große Ohrringe mit durchbrochenen Kügelchen (vgl. Abb. 472, 4) und zahlreiche Fingerringe, die Mädchen auch noch Brustgehänge aus Münzen, Korallen, Bernstein, Bergkristall u. a. Haar und Nägel färben sie mit dem im ganzen Morgenlande gebräuchlichen Chna oder Henna (s. Bd. II, 1, S. 353) braun, und zur Pflege der Zähne kauen sie wohlriechendes Harz (sikis).

Die Wohnhäuser sind wie die lesghischen an Hängen z. T. in die Erde gegraben, aus Steinen gebaut, mit Lehm verputzt und innen und an der Vorderseite geweißt. Das flache Dach besteht

aus Balken und einer Deckschicht von Rohr, Stroh und Lehm und ruht auf einem Querbalken, der von einer beschnitzten Säule gestützt wird; vorn ragt es 2 m vor und bildet eine Vorlaube.

Die Häuser enthalten gewöhnlich ein Frauen-, ein Männer- und ein Gastgemach. Die letzteren sind mit Teppichen ausgelegt, an den Wänden hängen Waffen, und auf den Wandbrettern stehen Ziergefäße. Im Frauenraum befinden sich an der einen Wand neben der Tür und dem Fenster der Kochherd, an der Nebenwand hinter einem Vorhang auf Bortbrettern allerlei Geschirr, gegenüber bis 2 m hohe Tongefäße für Wein, Mehl, getrocknete Früchte, Säcke mit Getreide, Mistfladen und Brennholz, an der vierten Wand auf Brettern, die auf Steinen liegen, das Bettzeug und darunter Behälter für Milch, Butter, Käse.

Die Bergjuden beschäftigen sich vorwiegend mit Landbau (Weizen, Gerste, Reis, Tabak, Gemüse, Obst, Wein); früher, vor der Einführung der künstlichen Farben erzielten sie auch erheblichen Gewinn aus dem Anbau von Krapp. Der Bestand an Vieh ist gering, es werden meist nur Büffel wegen ihrer fetten Milch und Esel wegen ihrer Leistungsfähigkeit gehalten. Die in den Städten Wohnenden sind Händler, Hausierer u. dgl.

Die Arbeitsteilung zwischen Mann und Frau ist die übliche: der Mann verrichtet die schwereren Land- und Hausarbeiten, während der Frau die Besorgung der Hauswirtschaft, des Viehes und die leichteren Feldarbeiten obliegen. Bei manchen Verrichtungen leisten die Nachbarn und die jungen Leute des Dorfes Hilfe, so beim Bau eines Hauses, beim Trocknen und Einsalzen des Fleisches, das in Stücken oder als Würste unter der Decke des Frauenraumes zum Wintervorrat aufgehängt wird.

Weitgehende Gastfreundschaft ist ihnen Ehrenpflicht. Wenn ein Gast kommt, läßt man alle Arbeit ruhen, ruft angesehene Männer aus dem Dorfe herbei und bewirtet alle reichlich mit Speise und Trank, wobei auch mit Harmonika und Handtrommel (tepa, ein auf einer Seite mit Haut bespannter Holzzylinder) aufgespielt wird. Als Vorspeisen werden in den Kreis der hockenden Gäste Brotfladen, Salz, Zwiebeln, Lauch u. ä. gestellt, und darauf nach der Handwaschung die Hauptgerichte: Fleischspeisen, meist am Spieß gebraten (šašlyk, chinkal, durma, s. S. 783 und 806), Reis mit Fleisch (plow, oš), Grützbrei usw. Das Fleisch zerreißt der Hausherr mit den Händen und legt es den Gästen vor. Feste Speisen ißt man mit den Fingern oder mit einem Eßstäbchen, flüssige mit dem Löffel.

Die Männer pflegen in anderen Dörfern einen Glaubensgenossen oder einen Mohammedaner als Gastfreund zu haben, wo sie Unterkunft finden, und oft wird er ihr Blutsfreund (kurdaš): sie küssen

sich, tauschen die Waffen und geloben einander, sich in jeder Not beizustehen.

Auch die Blutrache gilt ihnen noch als Gesetz.

Wenn aber binnen dreier Tage die Sippe des Ermordeten sich nicht an einem Mitgliede der Sippe des Mörders rächen kann, versuchen die Dorfältesten beide zu versöhnen und das Wergeld (hundert bis sechshundert Rubel) zu bestimmen. Willigen die Angehörigen des Erschlagenen ein, dann bitten die Mitglieder der feindlichen Sippe sie in ihrem Hause fußfällig um Vergebung, und jene nehmen sie durch einen Kuß als Blutsverwandte an. Der Mörder aber wird auf ein bis eineinhalb Jahre in ein entferntes Dorf verbannt und danach ebenfalls als Blutsverwandter anerkannt.

Ehebündnisse werden von den Vätern verabredet, und der Bräutigam muß für das erwählte Mädchen, das gewöhnlich dreizehn bis vierzehn Jahre alt ist, einen ziemlich hohen Preis (mindestens hundertfünfzig Rubel), sowie die Kosten ihres Hochzeitsgewandes und der Festlichkeiten bezahlen.

Die Hochzeit dauert gewöhnlich vom Sonntag bis Mittwochabend und findet meistens im Winter statt, weil zu der Zeit noch genügend Wein vorhanden ist, um bei den zahlreichen Umtrunken während der Festtage auszureichen. Am Sonntagabend wird ein Schmaus gegeben, zu dem aus jedem Haus ein Bursche und ein Mädchen eingeladen werden, die das Gefolge des Brautpaares bilden. Am Montag wählen die Burschen unter sich die Brautführer, einen „Schach" und einen „Wesir" und belustigen sich, wie auch am nächsten Tage, mit Tanzen, Spielen, Musizieren, Trinken. Am Dienstag werden die Brautgeschenke überreicht, die der Rabbiner aufschreibt, und im Hause des Bräutigams bewirtet man die Frauen des Dorfes. Am selben Abend wird die Braut von ihren Freundinnen ins Bad geführt und ihr der Hochzeitsschmuck angelegt. Der Bräutigam wird am Mittwochmittag ins Bad geleitet, und danach begibt er sich zu den Eltern der Braut, denen er Hände und Füße küßt, und die ihm nun ihre Tochter übergeben. Das Brautpaar zieht mit ihrem Gefolge von da zur Synagoge, in dessen Hof die Braut von einem Verwandten auf den Armen getragen wird. Hier wird die Trauung unter einem Baldachin vom Rabbiner vorgenommen, der, nachdem der Bräutigam der Braut den Ring an den Finger gesteckt und ihr eine Silbermünze in die Hand gedrückt hat, den Ehevertrag vorliest, Gebete spricht und Wein zu trinken gibt aus einem Glas, das er dann auf einem Steine unter dem Baldachin zerschmettert. Auf dem Heimweg überschüttet man das junge Paar mit Mehl und Weizen- und Gerstenkörnern (Fruchtbarkeitszauber), und vor dem Abendschmaus, an dem das ganze Dorf teilnimmt, überreichen die Gäste Geldspenden, die ausgerufen und aufgezeichnet werden. Nach Mitternacht zieht sich das junge Paar ins Brautgemach zurück, dessen Tür von einem Freunde bewacht wird. Nach drei Stunden erscheint der junge Ehemann wieder, und die Frauen begeben sich zu der Neuvermählten, während die Burschen des Gefolges Schüsse abfeuern. Die junge Frau bietet jedem Mädchen ein Glas Wein, das diese mit einem Geldstück zusammen zurückgibt. Die Burschen werden mit Tüchern u. dgl. von der Brautmutter beschenkt, welche bei der Neuvermählten mit deren Schwestern

neun Tage verweilt, um sie zu trösten und zu beraten. Am zehnten Tage findet noch ein Familienschmaus statt, und dann werden die jungen Eheleute „freigegeben", um ihr Eheleben zu beginnen. Die junge Frau darf drei bis vier Monate lang den Schleier, mit dem sie vor der Trauung verhüllt wurde, nicht ablegen und das Haus nicht verlassen.

Wenn die Frau zänkisch ist oder zu früh altert, darf sich der Mann eine zweite nehmen. Stirbt der Mann, so muß dessen jüngerer Bruder die Witwe heiraten.

Bei der Geburt steht oder kniet die Frau und hält sich an einem von der Decke herabhängenden Stricke fest; dabei ist immer eine Hebamme zugegen, und die Frauen des Dorfes bringen dieser allerlei Lebensmittel. Ist das Neugeborene ein Knabe, so wird das Ereignis mit einem Schmause gefeiert; ist es ein Mädchen, kümmert sich niemand um Mutter und Kind. Nach acht Tagen wird der Knabe in der Synagoge vom Rabbiner oder vom Schlachter beschnitten; der auf dem „Sessel des Propheten Elias" sitzende Pate hält dabei das Kind, während der Vater betet und ihm einen Namen gibt: seinen eigenen oder den eines Verwandten. Mädchen werden nach einem starken Tier oder nach einem Edelmetall benannt. Die Wöchnerin hütet neun bis zehn Tage das Bett und nimmt nach vierzig Tagen ein Bad, wenn sie einen Knaben, nach sechzig Tagen, wenn sie ein Mädchen geboren hat.

Wenn jemand stirbt, lassen alle Dorfinsassen ihre Arbeit im Stich und eilen zum Sterbehaus. Die Frauen kommen zum Zeichen der Trauer in ein weißes Tuch gehüllt und in gelben Pantoffeln, stimmen das Klagegeheul an, zerkratzen sich mit den Nägeln und raufen sich das Haar. Die Leiche wird gewaschen und mit Hemd, Hosen, Strümpfen, Mütze, Handschuhen bekleidet, über die noch der Gebetsmantel (sysit), das Totenhemd und ein Gürtel — alle aus weißem Leinen — angelegt werden. Dann trägt man sie zum Friedhof und setzt sie ohne Sarg, den Kopf nach Osten gerichtet, im Grabe bei, das mit Brettern und Erde zugedeckt wird. Auf ihm errichtet man einen Denkstein, auf dem der Sterbetag, die Tugenden des Verstorbenen und einige Sprüche aus den Propheten aufgeschrieben sind. Die Angehörigen bleiben während der Trauerwoche (ovil) im Hause, wo die Männer abends und morgens Abschnitte aus den heiligen Schriften lesen, während die Frauen weiter um den Toten klagen und schreien, und am siebenten Tage veranstaltet man den Leichenschmaus (chairat). Die Trauer dauert

ein Jahr, und während dieser Zeit dürfen die Angehörigen weder baden, noch an Vergnügungen teilnehmen. Jeden Montag und Freitag klagen sie gemeinsam, und elf Monate lang sprechen die Eltern oder die Kinder des Verstorbenen in der Synagoge das Gebet für die Ruhe seiner Seele (kadiš); dann wird der Grabstein gesetzt, und jedes Jahr begeht man am Sterbetage eine Gedächtnisfeier.

Der Tod wird nach der Meinung der Bergjuden durch den Todesengel verursacht, der den Sterbenden mit dem Schwerte schlägt oder ihm von dessen Spitze drei Tropfen Gift in den Mund träufelt. Die Seele flattert über dem toten Körper und wird, wenn man diesen aus dem Hause trägt, von bösen Geistern bedroht, die man durch hochgeworfene Silbermünzen zu besänftigen sucht. Dann fliegt die Seele in den Himmel und wird nach sieben Tagen, während deren sie noch auf die Erde zurückkehren darf, von Gott gerichtet. Die Vorstellungen von diesem Gericht entsprechen im großen und ganzen der Schilderung der Bibel. Sünder kommen in die Hölle oder werden zu tausendjähriger Wanderung verdammt, in deren Verlauf die Seele in die verschiedensten Tierleiber eingeht und Qualen erduldet, bis auch sie die Hölle aufnimmt, wo sie ähnlich, wie es Dante schildert, gefoltert und so von Sünden gereinigt wird, und dann sich zu den guten Seelen im Paradies gesellen darf. Die Hölle, die sich unter der Erde befindet, ist mit dem Paradies über dem siebenten Himmel durch einen glühenden Draht verbunden, von dem die Seele abstürzt, wenn sie noch mit Sünde beladen ist; erst, wenn sie völlig gereinigt ist, gelingt ihr der Übergang.

Die Bethäuser sind große Säle mit Fenstern in drei Wänden; an der fensterlosen Westwand steht ein Schrank, die „Lade des Gesetzes", in dem die Rollen der heiligen Schriften und die silbernen, glöckchenbehängten Aufsätze für diese liegen, und ein Altartisch, an dem der Rabbiner beim Gottesdienst hebräische Gebete liest, in der Mitte des Saales ein Pult, wo er Montags, Donnerstags und Sonnabends predigt. Beim Gebete kehren sich die Bergjuden nach Westen. Frauen dürfen die Synagoge selbst nicht betreten, höchstens die Vorhalle, und ihre religiösen Verpflichtungen beschränken sich fast nur auf drei: am Freitagabend zwei kleine Wachskerzen aufzustellen, beim Brotbacken ein Stückchen Teig ins Feuer zu werfen und dabei ein Gebet zu sprechen, im Laufe von zwei Wochen nach der monatlichen Reinigung ein Bad zu nehmen.

Neben Jehova und der auf Bibel, Talmud und Mischna sich gründenden Religion glauben sie an das Walten von Naturgöttern und Geistern, das dem Menschen weit fühlbarer wird als der unfaßbare „einzige Gott". Diese Gottheiten ähneln denen anderer kaukasischer Stämme, und das zeugt außer anderen Hinweisen dafür, daß die Bergjuden stark mit einheimischen Kaukasiern gemischt sind, wenn diese

nicht gar ihre Grundschicht bilden; jedenfalls stehen sie in dieser Hinsicht in starkem Gegensatz zu den Leghiern, wo der viel später eingeführte Islam alteinheimischen Glauben und Kult fast spurlos verdrängt zu haben scheint. Die Götter und Geister sind unsichtbar, einige jedoch können Tier- oder Menschengestalt annehmen, wie z. B. Ilch-Novi (= Elias), der Gott des Reichtums, der als armer Wandersmann oder als langbärtiger, weißer Geist erscheint, Num-Negir (= dessen Name nicht genannt werden darf), der als weißer Marder sich zeigende Gott der Fruchtbarkeit und Beschützer der Reisenden. Die Wassergöttin Ser-ovi oder „Wassermutter" Ledej-Ov (vgl. S. 770), wacht als weiße Jungfrau an Gewässern, damit die Menschen sie nicht verschmutzen; sie sucht junge Männer an sich zu locken, um sie zu ertränken, quält unbehütete Wöchnerinnen und reißt ihnen die Eingeweide heraus; sie fürchtet sich aber vor Eisen, deshalb tragen die Bergjuden Fingerringe aus Stahl. Schehadu, der Böse, haust mit seinen zahlreichen dienstbaren Geistern und deren Weibern und Kindern in der Erde; diese sind menschenähnlich, haben aber Hörner und Schwänze wie die Teufel, breite Füße und Hände mit sechs klauenbewehrten Fingern, schiefes Maul und krumme Backenzähne. Schehadu schickt sie aus, um irdische Frauen zu rauben, um die Menschen irrsinnig, besessen (šehaduni) zu machen, um die zu würgen, die heißes Wasser auf die Erde schütten. Unsichtbare Gottheiten sind Semirej, Idor, Gudur-boi und Kesen-boi. Zu Semirej, den Gott des Regens und Gewitters, betet man auf dem Friedhof bei Dürre, und wenn es regnet, wenden die Kinder ihre Kittel und Mützen um und singen, Reigen tanzend, ein Bittlied um mehr Regen. Idor, den Gott der Pflanzenwelt, bittet man in der „Nacht des Idor" (Šev-Idor) zu Anfang des Frühlings um Erntesegen und verzehrt beim Abendschmaus getrocknete oder gesalzene Früchte. Die Götter des Herbstes und des Winters, Gudur-boi und Kesen-boi, genießen keine Verehrung mehr; ihre Namen werden nur noch von jungen Burschen bei Umzügen in den Nächten zwischen dem Neu- und Vollmond des Novembers im Liede genannt. Der Ahnenverehrung entsprossen ist der Hausgeist Oschdeho-mar, der, ähnlich dem großrussischen, als siebenköpfige Schlange unter dem Fußboden des Hauses wohnt, selbst unsichtbar ist, aber seine Söhne sehen läßt; er ist der Hüter des Wohlergehens der Familie, und man spendet ihm Honig.

Die Hauptfeste des Bergjuden sind Ostern und Purim, das

Fest des Mardochai und der Esther, die sie Nissonu und Homonu nennen. Für diese Tage nähen die Frauen neue Kleider, säubern und weißen das Haus, bereiten Nußspeise, und nach dem Besuch des Bethauses seitens der Männer vergnügt man sich an diesen Festtagen mit Essen, Trinken, gegenseitigen Besuchen, Eierspenden, Tanzen. Beim Feste Kuschtschi verbringen die Männer die Nacht zum siebenten Tage, Arawo genannt, im Bethaus mit dem Lesen der Psalmen Davids, während die jungen Mädchen zu Hause das Schicksal befragen, da in dieser Nacht Gott das Geschick eines jeden im kommenden Jahr bestimmt. An einem Tage im Frühjahr errichten die jungen Leute vor den Häusern Scheiterhaufen, und die Burschen springen abends durch das Feuer; man glaubt, daß Christus in dieser Nacht auf die Erde niedersteige, um die Juden mit allem möglichen Unheil zu schlagen, daß er aber die Häuser verschone, vor denen ein Feuer brennt.

Trotz des vielen Nichtjüdischen, das in ihrem religiösen Leben zutage tritt, sind sie eifervolle Bekenner des jüdischen Glaubens und beschäftigen sich eingehend mit dem Talmud. Europäische Schulbildung halten sie deshalb für unnütz und schädlich, und es bestehen bei ihnen nur einige Schulen zur Ausbildung von Rabbinern und Schächtern.

Bei Krankheiten, welche böse Geister verursachen sollen, wenden sie sich an Zauberer (chakum) um Hilfe.

Um festzustellen, ob ein „böser Wunsch" eine Krankheit bewirkt hat, wirft man Mehl an die Wand, und wenn es daran haftet, hält man diese Annahme für richtig. Den Menschen, der Böses gewünscht hat, erkennt man, wenn man Brotkügelchen unter Nennung von Namen ins Feuer wirft; wenn dabei eines wieder herausspringt, zeigt es damit den Namen des Übeltäters an. Von diesem verlangt man dann Speichel, um Gesicht und Schultern des Kranken damit einzureiben, und das herausgesprungene Kügelchen gibt man dem Kranken zerrieben mit Wasser ein.

Wenn Kinder Krämpfe haben, glaubt man, daß Num-negir es würge, weil er seinen Eltern zürne, und zieht eine Zauberin zu Rate; das Kind wird durch einen Dreifuß gezogen, aus dem Fenster oder der Tür gehalten, in eine Kiste gesperrt, um es von dem Zugriffe des Gottes zu befreien. Zur Abwehr von Krankheiten hängt man sich Amulette (hejkel), dreieckige Täschchen aus Tuch oder Leder, in die mit Fäden umwickelte Gräser und Steine gesteckt werden, um den Hals oder näht sie unter der Achsel oder auf den Rücken in den Überrock. Als Heilmittel gelten verschiedene Kräuter, Öle, Salze, Schaffleisch, Fleisch von Fledermäusen, Igeln, Ratten, das Blut schwarzer und weißer Vögel u. a.

6. Türkische Völker

Von den in Kaukasien vertretenen türkisch-tatarischen Völkern, die nicht mit Kaukasiern innig verschmolzen sind, gehören die Aserbaidschaner Tataren in den persischen Kulturbereich (s. Bd. II, 1, S. 396 ff.), die Tarakamá, die Karapapachen und die Türken bei Batum und Kars in den osmanisch-kurdischen (s. Bd. II, 1, S. 385 ff. u. S. 400 ff.). Die Truchmenen und die mongolischen Kalmyken in den nördlichen Steppen haben die Eigenart ihrer Stammesgenossen jenseits des Kaspischen Meeres (s. Bd. II, 1, S. 342 ff.) und im Altai (s. Bd. II, 1, S. 364 f.) im wesentlichen bewahrt.

a) Die Bergtataren

In einem ähnlichen Verhältnis wie die Bergjuden stehen die Karatschaier und die Berg-Kabardiner oder Taulu zu den Altkaukasiern. Die Karatschaier wohnen westlich des Elbrus (Mingi-tau) an den Quellbächen des Kuban, die den Utschkulan (= drei Gurte) umschließen, bis zur Teberda. Sie haben als Nachbarn im Osten Kabardiner und Taulu, im Süden Swanen, im Norden Russen und Abchasen; im Westen und Südwesten ist unbewohntes Hochgebirge. Ihren Namen scheinen sie von einem Bach (karačai = Schwarzbach), nicht von einem Stammvater Karatscha erhalten zu haben. Die Tscherkessen nennen sie Karšaga-Kuš'a, die Georgier Karatäioli, die nördlichen Tataren Kara-Tšerkes (ebenso die Georgier im Mittelalter: Kara-Džik'i, ihr Land Kara-Džachet'i), das heißt: Untertanen der Tscherkessen.

Nach der Überlieferung sind sie vor etwa vier Jahrhunderten aus der Krim eingewandert, wahrscheinlich aber sind sie Nachkommen von Tataren, die aus dem Kubangebiet von den Tscherkessen vertrieben worden waren und sich in dieses ausgesprochene Rückzugsgebiet geflüchtet hatten; hier haben sie sich mit Flüchtlingen aus Swanien, Mingrelien, Abchasien und mit Tscherkessen gemischt. Sie waren den Kabardinern tributpflichtig, ehe sie in den dreißiger Jahren des vorigen Jahrhunderts unter die Herrschaft der Russen kamen.

Von den Kabardinern waren auch ihre östlichen Nachbarn, die Taulu, abhängig. Sie stammen wohl von den Tataren ab, die im dreizehnten und vierzehnten Jahrhundert in den Steppen an der Kúma hausten und nach der um 1408 erfolgten Zerstörung ihrer großen Stadt Madshar (die aber nichts mit den Ungarn, den Madjaren, zu tun hat) am linken Ufer der Kuma, die reich an

Abb. 506. Karatschaier aus Kart-Dshurt am oberen Kuban (Nach Graf J. Zichy)

stattlichen Bauwerken war (daher auch Kyrk-madžar = vierzig Gebäude genannt), und in der der mächtige Chan Mamai († 1380) seinen Sitz hatte, in die Bergtäler zurückgedrängt wurden. Die Taulu (= Gebirgler) werden gewöhnlich als Bergtataren oder Bergkabardiner bezeichnet; die Tscherkessen nennen sie nach den einzelnen Stämmen Tšegem-Kuš'a, Balkar-Kuš'a usw.; letztere heißen bei den Georgiern Bassiani.

Die Karatschaier werden wegen ihrer feinen Gesichtszüge und ihrer weißen Haut gerühmt, jedenfalls tritt wenig Mongolisches in ihren Gesichtern hervor, die vielmehr die Merkmale der Südkaukasier zeigen (Abb. 506 u. 507). Sie haben wie die Taulu schwarze Augen und Haare und sind mittelgroß; bei diesen soll die Hautfarbe dunkel, der Bartwuchs spärlicher sein. Die Frauen sind untersetzt, kräftig gebaut, weniger hübsch als ihre kabardinischen Nachbarinnen.

Die Tracht der Männer ist die tscherkessische, und die der Frauen der kabardinischen ähnlich: weite Hosen, rotes, beiderseits bis zu den Hüften aufgeschlitztes Hemd, silberner Gürtel, Leibchen und ein oder zwei Überkleider (bešmet) mit engen oder weiten Unter-

Ärmeln, mit Silberborten, -knöpfen u. s. verziert. Den Kopf bedecken die Mädchen mit der kabardinischen Mütze (s. Abb. 446), die Frauen wickeln ein buntes Tuch mehrfach darum und lassen die Enden beiderseits herabhängen oder legen noch einen kurzen weißen Schleier darüber.

Ihre Waffen sind die üblichen; früher hatten sie außerdem Schilde (kalkan) und zwei Arten Spieße (sungé, mudžurá).

Die Häuser (s. Abb. 508—512) werden aus Balken gebaut, bei den Balkaren aus Granit und Schiefer, und haben gewöhnlich eine kleine offene Vorlaube. Das Dach ist bei den Taulu wie bei den Lesghiern flach, aus Balken, Zweigen und Lehm hergestellt; die Karatschaier haben mit Stroh gedeckte Giebeldächer, deren drei Längsbalken von einem bogenförmigen Querbalken gestützt werden. Die Häuser umfassen gewöhnlich nur einen Raum mit kleinen Fensterluken und niedriger Tür; der Herd mit Schornstein und Kesselhaken befindet sich an einer der lehmverstrichenen Wände, die mit Kleidern, Waffen, Gehörnen, Filzteppichen mit aufgenähten Verzierungen u. a. behängt sind. Neben dem Hause ragt zuweilen ein Wehrturm empor.

Wirtschaftliches. Sie beschäftigen sich hauptsächlich mit der Zucht von schwarzen Fettschwanzschafen, Ziegen, Pferden, Maultieren, Eseln, früher auch von Schweinen; Rinder haben sie weniger.

Das Vieh lassen sie im Winter im kabardinischen Unterland, im Sommer auf den Almen weiden, wo sich die Hirten Nothütten aufstellen: drei oder vier Stangen und darüber ein Stück Filz (koš). Die Felder sind sorgfältig eingezäunt und bewässert, aber der Ertrag ist gering, da nur geringe Flächen schlechten Ackerlandes vorhanden sind, auf denen Gerste, Hirse, Weizen, Mais, Bohnen, Kartoffeln gebaut werden.

Abb. 507. Karatschaierin
(Phot. E. W. Pässenmayer)

Erzeugnisse ihres Hauswerkes sind: Tuche (šal), Filzteppiche (kiis), Wettermäntel (jamatšé), Regenkapuzen (bašlyk), Sättel und Schuhe aus Wildziegenleder, Teppiche aus Ziegenhaar. Diese Erzeugnisse sowie Tabak, Felle von Bären, Wölfen, Mardern, Füchsen, Wildkatzen, Bezoarziegen u. a. bringen sie nach Suchum, Batalpaschinsk oder nach der Ratscha und nach Oni in Imerien und holen sich dafür Stoffe, Kupfergeschirr, Steinsalz u. a., alles auf

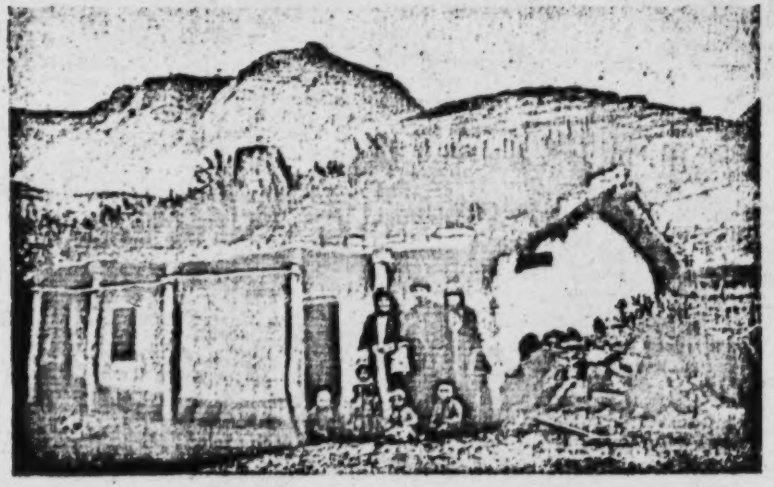


Abb. 506. Wohnhaus, Karatschaier

Pferden oder, soweit Wege vorhanden, auf kleinen zweirädrigen Wagen mit Filzdach. Als Nebenerwerb treiben sie Holzflößerei.

Die Nahrung besteht hauptsächlich aus Brot, Milch, Käse (biälik), Butter, Schaf- und Pferdefleisch. Beliebte Speisen sind: Schaffleisch, gekocht oder in Stücke geschnitten und an Stäbchen über dem Feuer geröstet (šišlik), oder mit saurer Milch, Knoblauch und Gewürzkräutern zubereitet (šurpá), Kopf und Gehirn vom Schaf, Hammel am Spieß gebraten, Kornelkirschen mit Honig eingemacht. Getränke: Kefir, Bier aus Gerste (ara) und aus Hirse (boza), Branntwein aus Gerste und Weizen, Limonade aus Beberitzen.

Gesellschaft. Die Karatschaier gliedern sich wie die Tscherkessen in drei Stände: Fürsten (bi), Edelleute (özden), Bauern (asat), abgesehen von den zahlreichen Geistlichen (mullah) und den früheren

Sklaven. Wenn Fürsten von Sklavinnen oder Mägden Söhne hatten, übergaben sie diese einem Pflegevater zur Erziehung (vgl. S. 763 f.), und nach ihrem Tode waren sie mit ihren ehelichen Brüdern gleichberechtigt.

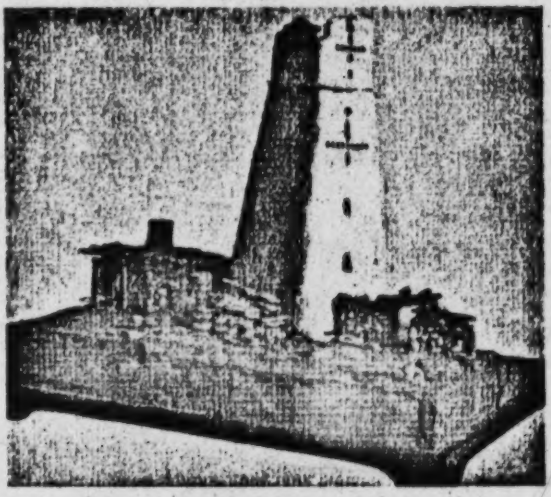


Abb. 509. Balkarisches Haus mit Wehrturm von berggeorgischer Bauart. Tscherek-Tal
(Modell im Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

Die Ehen der Karatschaier, welche gewöhnlich nur eine Frau nehmen, werden vor dem Geistlichen geschlossen und sind meist sehr kinderreich. Die Verlobung findet längere Zeit, bis zu einem Jahre, vor der Hochzeit statt, und während dieser Zeit darf der Bräutigam die Braut nicht sehen, auch nicht mit deren Eltern sprechen. Nach einigen Monaten ehelichen Zusammenlebens kehrt die junge Frau oft auf ein bis zwei Jahre zu ihren Eltern zurück, wo sie der Mann besucht, und so lange darf sie sich vor ihren männlichen Verwandten nicht unverschleiert zeigen. Brautraub kommt im Einverständnis

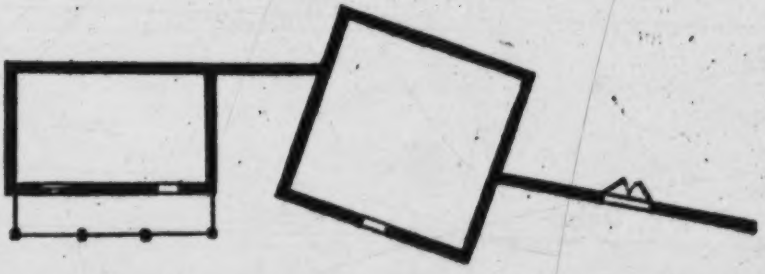


Abb. 510. Grundriß zu Abb. 509: links Wohnhaus mit Vordach, rechts Hofmauer mit Tor, in der Mitte der Wehrturm (Nach Graf J. Zichy)

Tafel XXX *Andi aus Etschedili am Oberlauf des Andischen Koißu*

(Nach M. v. Déchy)

[facing p. 840]

mit den Mädchen oder deren Eltern noch vor, danach muß trotzdem das Brautgeld erlegt werden.

Die Erziehung der Knaben ist streng. Wenn einer dauernd ungehorsam ist, wird er öffentlich vor der Moschee (mesdžét) vermahnt und, bleibt er unverbesserlich, aus dem Dorf gejagt.

Leichenbegängnisse finden auch bei den Karatschaiern unter dem Klagegeschrei der Frauen statt, während die Männer sich die

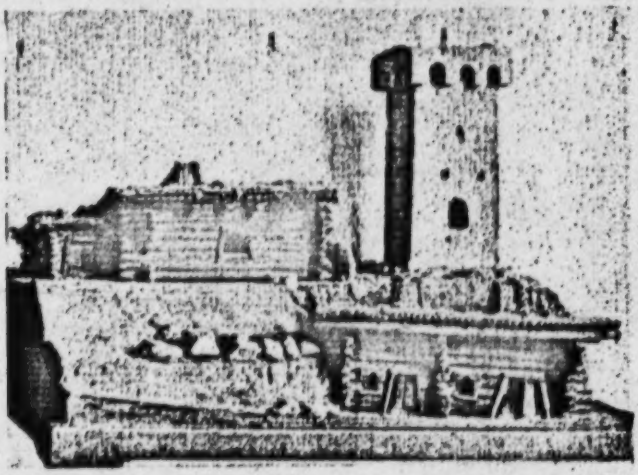


Abb. 511. Taulagehöft im Tschegemtal, Turm nach Swanenart
(Modell im Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg)

Stirn mit der Knute (s. Abb. 451) schlagen und mit dem Messer in die Ohrläppchen stechen. Die Friedhöfe sind mit Steinmauern umgeben. An der Teberda errichtet man auf den Gräbern ein Viereck aus acht bis zwölf dicken Balken, an anderen Orten Steinkisten oder spitzbogige Giebelhäuschen (vgl. Abb. 474).

Der Islam wurde erst 1782 von dem Kabardiner Isaak unter den Karatschaiern verbreitet; sie sind nun eifrige Sunniten, halten die Fasten und essen kein Schweinefleisch mehr. Die Mullah unterrichten die Knaben, bis sie fähig sind, aus dem Koran in der Moschee vorzulesen (tochtá). Die Balkaren sollen weder Geistliche noch Moscheen haben.

Trotz des Islams verehren sie als höchsten Gott den alttürkischen Tägri und neben ihm als Gott der Berge den heiligen Elias (nebi

Tafel XXXI *Baschkirischer Krieger*

(Farbige Lithographie, Leipzig 1813, im Stadtgeschichtlichen Museum, Leipzig)

[facing p. 841]

Ilija), dem zu Ehren sie tanzen und singen und Lämmer, Butter, Käse, Milch, Bier opfern (vgl. S. 616). Wie andere Kaukasier haben sie heilige Bäume und Quellen (vgl. S. 768) und wahrsagen mit Hilfe von Gerstenkörnern, Bohnen und Steinen, indem sie einundvierzig in bestimmter Anordnung in Häufchen legen, oder nach tatarischer Weise aus den Rissen von Schafschulterblättern (s. S. 771). Mit der Anfertigung von Amuletten und der Besprechung von Krankheiten befassen sich die Geistlichen (vgl. Bd. II, 1, S. 358). Christliche Reste sind in diesem Gebiete wenige anzutreffen, nur einige Kirchen, darunter eine 6 m lange bei Tschegem, bei der schwangere Frauen ein Tier opfern, um eine leichte Niederkunft zu haben.

b) Die Kymyken

Die Kymyken oder Kumuken (vielleicht vom türkischen kym = beweglich) bewohnen das Küstenland zwischen dem Rubas-tschai und dem Terek, dessen südlicher Teil von Petrowsk und Tschir-jurt an von den Vorbergen Daghestans eingenommen wird, während der nördliche eine Salzwüste ist, die von den zahlreichen in die Flußgebiete des Sulak und des unteren Terek mit dem Aksai gehörigen schilfbewachsenen Wasserläufen, Seen und Sümpfen durchsetzt ist.

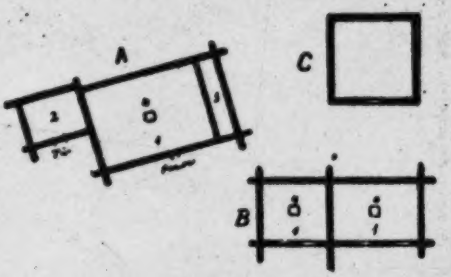


Abb. 512. Grundriß eines Gehöftes der Tauln im Tschegemtale: A und B Wohnhäuser: 1 Stuben; 2 Vorraum für Vieh; 3 Kammer für Vorräte; 4 Herdstellen mit hölzernem Rauchfang; C Wehrturm (Nach Graf J. Zichy)

Die Kymyken sind wahrscheinlich die Nachkommen eines Teiles der Horde des Chans Mamai von Madschar (s. S. 836), die ihrerseits vermutlich aus den Resten der Chasaren in Verbindung mit anderen aus dem Osten vergestoßenen Tatarenstämmen hervorgegangen ist. Die Entstehung des Chasarenreiches am Ende des sechsten oder Anfang des siebenten Jahrhunderts scheint mit der Festsetzung der schwarzen Bulgaren (Kara-Bolgar) im fünften und sechsten Jahrhundert am Kuban zusammenzuhängen. Nach der Vernichtung des Chasarenreiches 966 (s. S. 827) verschwanden die Völkerschaften, die es gebildet hatten, sicher nicht vollständig, sondern zogen sich in schwerer zugängliche Gegenden, wie sie die Steppen zwischen Wolga, Kuma und Terek bieten, zurück und wurden hier durch Teile der Horden verstärkt, welche bei der dritten und vierten türkischen Wanderung (Kumanen, Petschenegen, eigentliche

Tataren) im neunten und dreizehnten Jahrhundert — letztere mit Mongolen zusammen unter Dschingis-chan 1221 und unter Tamerlan 1395 — absplitterten und hier hängen blieben, wie die Bildung des Reiches von Madschar zeigt, zu dem im vierzehnten Jahrhundert auch ein Stück des östlichen Daghestans gehörte. Im vierzehnten und fünfzehnten Jahrhundert dehnten die Herrscher der Kymyken (šamchalá, später šamchali s. S. 774) ihr Reich nach Süden aus und machten Einfälle in das Gebiet der Georgier, welche deshalb die Russen um Hilfe baten; diese zerstörten den Sitz der Kymykenfürsten Tarku bei Petrowsk, und die Kymyken blieben seitdem von den Russen abhängig.

Abb. 513. Kymyke
(Nach Graf J. Zichy)

Ihre Mundart ist der der Nogaier nahe verwandt, was ebenso für die obigen Darlegungen spricht, wie ihre körperliche Beschaffenheit.

Die Körperlänge der Kymyken ist ziemlich bedeutend (1,70), bei den Frauen geringer (1,45 bis 1,60); die Arme sind lang, die Beine kurz. Der Schädel ist breit, die Stirn hoch und meist gerade, Mund und Ohren sind groß, die Lippen dick, die Nase ist breit und gerade, die Backenknochen stehen vor. Die Haare sind schwarz und schlicht, die Augen hellbraun, selten grau oder blau. Mongolische, flache Nasen kommen sehr selten vor, etwas häufiger schmale, zuweilen etwas gewölbte und auch mit Zipfel versehene wie bei den Gebirgsgeorgiern. Vorderasiatische Gesichter sind ebenfalls zu finden, selten arabische.

Die Kymyken sind gutmütig, friedfertig, fügsam, ernsthaft, arbeitsam; sie halten auf angemessenes, würdevolles Betragen und auf Sauberkeit. Sie sind keine Eiferer; sie verheiraten deshalb, obgleich sie schon seit dem dreizehnten Jahrhundert Sunniten sind, ihre Töchter auch an Schiiten.

Ihre Kleidung ist die gemeintatarische (vgl. Bd. II, 1, S. 387 u. a.). Das Haar flechten Mädchen in acht bis zehn, Frauen in einundzwanzig bis vierundzwanzig Zöpfchen (vgl. S. 883); wenige färben es nach persischer Sitte rot mit Chna (vgl. Bd. II, 1, S. 374), häufiger die Brauen mit Schwärze. Als Schmuck haben sie silberne Fingerringe und große silberne, schwarzoxydierte Ohrgehänge mit Kettchenbehang (vgl. S. 660, Abb. 472, Fig. 3 u. 4).

Die Häuser sind ebenfalls nach türkisch-tatarischer Art (vgl. Bd. II, 1, S. 388) gebaut und eingerichtet: unten Wirtschaftsräume, oben Männer- und Frauengemach, geweißt, mit je einem Fenster und einer Tür, davor die offene Veranda. Neben tatarisch-persischen

Geräten: niedrigen runden oder viereckigen Tischen (tepsi, vgl. Bd. II, 1, Abb. 233), verzierten Löffelschränken (täištachá), Kupferplatten (meśmaíl), Pilawschalen (zené, serpitá), Schöpflöffeln (täaltá), Wiegen u. a. haben auch russische Erzeugnisse Eingang gefunden, wie z. B. Samoware, Teegeschirr, Spiegel, eiserne Öfen.

Wirtschaftliches. Sie beschäftigen sich mit Fischfang, Vieh- und Bienenzucht, neuerdings auch viel mit Ackerbau, der künstliche Bewässerung erfordert. Sie besitzen vorwiegend Schaf- und Pferde-

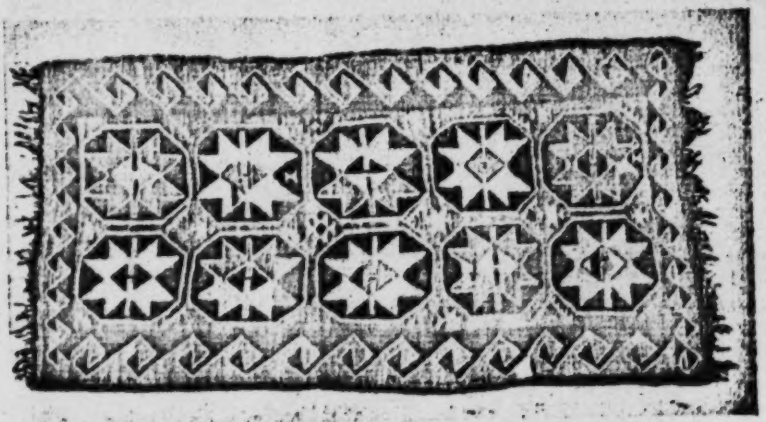


Abb. 514. Ziegenhaarteppich, Kymyken. Farben: orange, braun, violett, hell- und dunkelgrün, gelb, weiß

herden (tabún). Das Reitzeug besteht aus Trense und Bocksattel (artáák). Zum Fangen der wilden Pferde benutzen sie ein dünnes Seil (arkán), dessen eines Ende an einem Stock mit einer Schlaufe befestigt ist, durch die das Seil läuft und eine Schlinge bildet. Diese schleudert der berittene Fänger dem wilden Pferde über den Kopf und reißt es zu Boden; dann werden ihm die Füße überkreuz gebunden, der Sattel aufgelegt, und der Mann jagt auf dem wütend ausschlagenden und bockenden Tiere davon, bis es matt geworden ist und sich leiten läßt.

Ihre Erzeugnisse: Teppiche (s. Abb. 514), Schafwolle, Häute, Vieh, Salz, Fische u. a. verhandelten sie früher meist nach Persien, von wo sie dafür im Austausch Metallwaren, seidene und baumwollene Stoffe, Südfrüchte, Reis, Gewürze u. ä. bezogen und vielfach an ihre lesghischen Nachbarn weiter verhandelten. Der Ausgangs-

punkt dieses Handels war ihr Hauptort Tarku und dessen Hafen (jetzt Petrowsk), wohin auch die Lesghier ihre Erzeugnisse brachten. Auf dieses Volk übten die Kymyken durch ihren Handel, wie auch durch religiöse und politische Beziehungen großen Einfluß aus.

Die Kymyken besitzen die aristokratische Gesellschaftsordnung der Steppenvölker (vgl. Kirgisen, Bd. II, 1, S. 362 f.) mit Fürsten und Edlen als Führer und Herren der gemeinen Leute und der Sklaven, so wie vorher auch die Chasaren in schwarze und weiße geschieden waren.

Außer Tänzen, von denen der eine (vararíá) dem lesghischen gleicht, und der andere (bulká) von ärmeren, Gaben heischenden Männern oder Frauen getanzt wird, sind Singspiele bei ihnen beliebt, die von Burschen und Mädchen bei Hochzeiten und ähnlichen Gelegenheiten aufgeführt werden: Wettstreite zwischen Burschen und Mädchen in neckischen Versen (sarynd = Neckerei) oder der „Liebesstock" (süjdüm-taják), wobei sie sich gegenseitig mit einem Stabe auf die Schulter klopfen und abwechselnd Spott- und Liebeslieder singen.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3

Nos. 4 & 5 AUTUMN, 1937

GEORGICA

A JOURNAL OF GEORGIAN AND CAUCASIAN STUDIES

RUSTAVELI VOLUME

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Frontispiece.	
Rust'aveli and His Poem. G. Gvazava	3
The Personality and Outlook of Shot'a Rust'aveli. Prof. I. Javakhishvili	10
The Popularity and Influence of Shot'a Rust'aveli. G. Leonidze	13
T'eimuraz I and His Poem "The Martyrdom of Queen K'et'evan". (1 Plate.) Z. Avalishvili	17
On the Origin of the Georgians. Prof. C. F. Lehmann-Haupt	43
The Art of War in Georgia. I. Nanuashvili	80
Antiquities of Georgia. (26 Plates.) Prof. E. Taqaishvili	96
The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians. N. S. Janashia	117
Note on the Caucasian Snow-Partridge. W. E. D. Allen	154
On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians. Prof. N. Y. Marr	157
An Account of the Georgian Monks and Monasteries in Palestine. (3 Plates.) Archimandrite Gregory Peradze, Ph.D.	181
The Hurri-lands. Arshak Safrastian	247
Life and Work of Y. N. Marr, jun. B. Nikitin	278
The Abkhasian Name of the Supreme Being. Simon Janashia	287
The Caucasian Counterpart of an Old Egyptian Racing Chariot. (1 Plate.) L. Mukhelishvili	290
The Battle of Aspindza. Jacob Gogebashvili	293
The Thoughts of a Warrior. General G. Kvinitadze	306
Review—*Iz istorii drevney metallurgii Kavkaza*	312
The Society for Paleo-Mediterranean Studies	322
The Georgian Alphabet. A. Gogushvili	324

PUBLISHED FOR THE GEORGIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BY
STEPHEN AUSTIN & SONS, LTD., HERTFORD

[Title Page]

Price, £2 2s.

All rights reserved

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE ABKHASIANS

(From the materials on Abkhasian ethnography)

By N. S. JANASHIA

[A translation of the article published in *Khristianskii Vostok*, The Christian East, Petrograd, 1915, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 72–112.]

FOLLOWING the suggestion of N. Y. Marr that I should revise and translate into the Russian language my notes on "Materials on the ethnography of the Abkhasians", published 16–17 years ago in Georgian periodicals, chiefly in the journal *Moambe*, I made a careful review of all the collected "Materials", whether printed or still in manuscript form. In order to make the revision more complete I invited the aid of a special Commission from the Abkhasians of the village Adzvibzha, where the materials in question were actually collected. 114

The Commission consisted of the following persons: Mrs. Gidcha Janashia, my mother, with whose help the materials were checked originally; Kharikhan Tchengelia; Kelamat Delba, an eighty-year-old man, possessing a perfect knowledge of Abkhasian; Abdakhw Lolua, an orator; Alexis Dopua, who has a wide knowledge of tales and legends; Mushagw Tchengelia; and Alexis Janashia. The Commission worked with me for two days, the 2nd and 3rd July, 1914. 115

Furthermore, being still doubtful about certain aspects of my task, I checked the materials again at the meeting of the Adzvibzhuaans, during the month of August, and I found that all agreed in the main, differing only in matters of detail. One of my chief difficulties was that members of the Commission refused point blank to tell me tales I wanted to have in connection with my object, because "it is forbidden to tell tales in the daylight!" I therefore found it very hard to verify tales I had formerly taken down. So strong is the power of superstition nurtured for centuries! I am convinced that much that is incomprehensible in my "materials" would have been susceptible of explanation in the light of these tales. 124 [538] [128]

All the ceremonies and rites herein presented are described by a man who has taken an active part in their observance; at first, during his childhood, when he was imbued with profound religious feeling, and later in life when, although no longer professing "faith", he approached them with the greatest interest with a view to their study. I have endeavoured to record all the details, discovering in them curious survivals preserved through the popular beliefs and customs of the Abkhasians. In my opinion these details represent invaluable material for the scientific study of religious observance. 123

I was at one time very much tempted to use the material I had 121

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *ànts̲wa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1920, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibzhq

'mothers' and 'God', are often pronounced in the same manner." [1] 776
"During the study of the different religious beliefs and customs of [195]
the Abkhasians," he continues, "we came across the following phrase among others: *antswə r-məzəzə*—'the cause, guilt of God' (properly, 'the guilt or fault of gods,' N. Janashia). The roman r is the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural. . . . The above quoted construction—*antswə r-məzəzə*—could not have been arrived at unless the word *antswə* was used in the plural," justly remarks the author; "were it in the singular, we would have had *antswə i-məzəzə*."

Abkhasians regard the elements and manifestations of nature as rational beings. Each of these rational beings has his own gods, whom the orthodox Abkhasian serves honestly, in the light of his understanding. If the name of one, or more, of these gods has been forgotten by the people, he, the god, is simply called *inkhwə*[*]—"his 'part', 'share' of mother," or they use the full form *intswakhwə*—"his part of God," while under the influence of Christianity—*inəkhakhwə*, in which *akhwə* denotes "part, share, dole" and *anəkha*—"icon." [2]

In Abkhasian conception, God is One, but He is of infinitely numerous "doles" or parts. Not only each manifestation of nature, but also each tribe, family, or individual, has his own part of God, just as each Christian has his guardian-angel. The Abkhaz says *sɔntswakhwə*—"my (*s-* is the pronominal characteristic of the first [193]
person singular) part of God"; *untswakhwə*—"thy (*u-* is the pronominal characteristic of the second person singular) part of God." And it should be noted that one may offend against not only one's own "part of God", but also against "the part of God" of one's neighbour, or relation, etc. . . .

This conception of the Deity as a multiform being appears to account for the fact that the word *antswə* is in the plural. Here I will [191]
note that such a conception evidently did not prevail among the Abkhasians only; its traces remain to this day even among the

[1] P. Dcharaia, *On the Relation of the Abkhasian lang. to the Japhetic* (in Russian) in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics*, St. Pb., 1912, vol. iv, p. 65. 104

[*] The combination "*khw*" represents a sound uttered with one breath impulse. The underlined "*kh*" ("*kh*") constitutes actually a trigraph in which the digraph "*kh*" represents a guttural fricative equivalent to German *ach-laut*, and the *linea subscripta* a hard diffusive glottal spirant, which is not to be identified with the palatal (front) "*h*", and which is represented elsewhere, independently, as "*h*"; the combination "*kh*" (= *kh* + *h*) is thus a deeper guttural, glottal, sound than the German *ach-laut*. The labial semi-vowel "*w*" represents the labialization of the preceding "*kh*". "*Khw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*kh*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet*, pp. 48 and 39; see also his *Abkhasian-Russian Dictionary*, Leningrad, 1926, pp. XXXV–XXXVI. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[2] I. Javakhishvili derives *anəkha* from the Georgian word *khati*, icon. May not *khati* be derived from the Abkhasian verb *akhat'ara*? *A-khə*, head, *at'ara*, to give, to set, to level the head. Or is it a mere consonance?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

Georgians. Thus, according to Iv. Gv. Gomelauri, the well-known pedagogue, in K'iziqi (Signakh district, in Kakhet'i) they say: *tchemi dsili ghmert'i*; *sheni dsili ghmert'i*, " my part of God," " thy part of God." A. Dsuladze, who is well acquainted with the life of the Gurian people, told me that similar expressions were also used in Guria.

Further, as the reader will see for himself, the word *an*, " mother " constitutes part of the names of a series of gods, and several of these names are of the feminine gender, as Dcharaia has also justly noticed. In this connection I should like to direct the attention of the reader to the names of two gods, namely, *jabrdn* and *zhwabrdn*.* Each of these words has in our opinion several connotations; *jabrdn* is compounded of several words: *j* is the root from the word *a-j-ma*, a goat; *a-b*, father; *r* the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural; and *an*, mother. Thus *jabrdn* denotes " father and mother of goats ", i.e. " (fore)parents of goats ", or " god of goats ". In the same manner *zhwabrdn* is compounded of *a-zhw*, a cow, and of the components just explained, so that the whole denotes " father and mother of cows ", i.e. " (fore)parents of cows ".[1] It seems to me that at the dawning of their religio-philosophical life, the Abkhasians evidently worshipped equally both their male and female ancestors. How strong is this ancestor-worship among the Abkhasians even to-day will be shown in my work *The Ancestor Cult*.

Thus, as is the case of Dcharaia, I think that the word *antswd* is derived from the word *an* in the plural. I also think that the name *antswd*, of the Supreme Being, arose from the deification of ancestors. At first it was evidently used with the plural termination, and in the feminine gender, and later, in the course of time, from " many mothers-gods " arose the One God *antswd*.[2] The changing of the gender of gods is often observed in the religions of the primitive peoples, and *antswd* therefore constitutes no exception.[3]

Antswd is One, but He is plural as to His parts. All the gods, of which we will speak below, are subject to and obey Him as the Supreme Being. In the tales, I was told, it is said that *antswd's* mother came from a Megrelian princely *gvari* of Mkheidze, the Abkhasian form of

* The combination *zhw* is to be uttered with one breath impulse; it represents a labialised variety of "*zh*" (= French "*j*"). Cf. "*tsw*", p. 118, n. *. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Such a morphological interpretation does not appear admissible, as the word *an*, if in this case it denotes " mother ", is never combined with *ab*, father, but governs the first part of the compound word, *jab* and *zhab*, which, judging from the relative infix *r*, is assumed to be plural. [Note by the Editor, *Khr. V.*]

[2] And not *dntswa*, as it should have sounded and does really sound " mothers ". See above, pp. 118–19. [Ed., *Khris. Vos.*]

[3] If this supposition turns out to be justified, and the word *antswd* is not of Semero-Babylono-Assyrian origin (from *As*, *Asw*), its significance as a term employed in the history of religious beliefs generally will be greatly increased.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. ÀYT'AR-NÒHWA*

1. *Jabrán*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nòhwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nòhwa*, which is derived from *a-nòhwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nòhwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabrán*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashò* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswò*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəsa*, a combination of *adswò*, a stick with a tapering end, and *ərsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'hwəs-tsk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "h" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "hw" represents a labialized variety of "h". [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† The combination "dsw" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "ds". For this latter sound see p. 329 (ts'). [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] N. Y. MARR, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskii Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1913, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.
(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashò* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwədù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *àämen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megrelianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread is baked in rhododendron (*à-k'wazhwe*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

* The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*k'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*ky*", "*wy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotizes the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*k'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*k'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

[1] In Abkhasian *àtskyashwe*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *ant'ari*) *tsk'ebsv*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsk'ya*), good (*à-bsa*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *bosloba* (an abstract form of *boseli*, cowhouse) or *iloroba*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ilori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhini-Ant'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Àyt'ar!" etc. The dough is kneaded from the same leaven, only when calling to the cows they exclaim *wootsw*. Shrove Saturday is dedicated to *zhwabràn*. 796

3. *Anə̀kha-nə̀ħwa* (*Dopu-nə̀kha*)

Near Adzvibzha is a little village called Dopukət, where dwell the Dopua-s who are attendants (Geo. *me-khat-ur-i*) of the "icon"—*Dopu-nə̀kha*, revered by all the Adzvibzhaans and Dopukətans. This "icon" is known also as *shwəjə̀n-nə̀kha*, i.e. Sujuna icon, under which is meant, no doubt, St. George of Sujuna in Megrelia. This "icon" is called *zhwaràk'yə* by the wives of the Dpua-s, for the reason that the wives of Abkhasians have no right to call by name the eldest members of their husband's *gvari*, or his relations. D. I. Gulia thinks that the word *zhwarak'yə* is the same as the Georgian *zvaraki*, meaning sacrificial animal (the ancient Georgian *zuaraki* = *zowaraki*, Armenian *zowarak*).[1] In honour of this "icon" every Adzvibzhaan and Dopukətan family bakes, on the Shrove Sunday, a cake from millet flour (*sorghum*, in Geo. *ghomi*), which is offered as a gift to it. Prayers are said by the head of each family, and a handful of salt and a piece of wax candle are put aside for the "icon". The eldest of the Dopua goes round the houses and collects the salt and wax. 776 [602] 796

Mamsər Dopua told us: "At the present time our icon is in the village Sujuna."

4. *Àyt'ar-nə̀ħwa* (*khwazhwə̀-kərà*, in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərà*)

On the first Monday[2] of the Great Fast the ritual of supplication to Àyt'ar himself is observed. This supplication is otherwise called *khwazhwə̀-kərà* (in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərà*). *À-khwazhwə̀* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) is a special cake, sometimes coniform, and sometimes of round flattened shape. These cakes, which may be stuffed with cheese or not, but on this occasion are lenten, are invariably included in sacrificial offerings of the Abkhasians. They may be boiled, as on this occasion, or baked. *A-kərà* denotes "to hold". After it is called, in Abkhasian, the month of February, *khwazhwəkə̀n-mzà* (*a-mza*, month, moon). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) denotes also rhododendron, the leaves of which are indispensable in the making of sacrificial maize-cakes. [262] [782] [805] [824] [781]

[1] As a cult term this word is met with in the form زجرخ in Sabaean (Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, ii, 24, 37, cf. p. 191, n. 179), see N. Marr, *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhasians and Alans*, etc. (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Pb., 1906, vol. xvi, p. 203. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The Megrelians call this Monday *t'ut'ashkha bednieri*, lucky, or happy Monday, lit. the moon-day. With the Abkhasians, too, *Ayt'ar's* day is Monday; they pray to the moon exclusively on Mondays. [821]

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaħwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the [462] fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [784] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsàsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ħwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [352] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àämen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nə̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə* [539] *—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number 776 801 seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaħwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *ħwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian [193] *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with [821] the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [171] included in both pleiades.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVlbzha

The Megrelians also know this septenary, *shk'vit'-ul-i*, in honour of which the majority of families let loose a cow with a pierced ear. Her milk is not used for food. The bullock is offered in sacrifice, while the heifer is reared. The well-known Pshav *Kviria* is, perhaps, related to Megrelian Àyt'ar. I have pointed out above that among the Megrelians the god of cattle-breeding is called *Zhini Ant'ar*. *Ant'ar* is the Abkhasian *Àyt'ar*, while *zhini*, in Megrelian, "high," "heavenly," is equivalent to Abkhasian *khikh*. The Abkhasians, however, appear to have split up *Zhini Ant'ar* into two gods, *Àyt'ar* and *Khikh*. They appeal for help to the latter in the spring, when the cattle are taken to the mountain pastures. They pray to him under the shadows of trees. On four pillarets are placed poles, which are covered with leaves of trees, particularly of the wild hazel tree, the oak, or yoke-elm. A cheese curd wrapped in chestnut tree bark is placed on this table (*ashwamkyàt'*)* which is covered with greenery; on it is also placed *àtchamak'wa*, a kind of millet porridge, cooked with cheese. In front of it is also placed milk gruel. Women are not allowed to be present. The head of the family, standing with uncovered head in front of this green table, called *ashwamkyàt'*, prays that *Khikh*, the great part of the great deity Àyt'ar, may increase his cattle and send all good things. While praying he spills a little of the gruel towards the sea and towards the mountains, uttering *wootsw*. The prayer over, he takes the cheese curd and passes over it cross-wise a hazel "knife", which is really a stick cut into a tapering, knife-like shape, after which he actually cuts the cheese curd with a real knife.[1] This ceremony of prayer is followed by a dinner, the remains of which are not cleared away. Three of the supports or legs of *ashwamkyàt'* are cut off (each with one stroke), the fourth remains there untouched. It seems to me probable that the table itself received its name from this act of cutting. Megrelians also know this *ashwamkyàt'*, which they call *sumket* (*sumi keti*), "three sticks," derived, perhaps, from *sumkvat'*, in which case it would denote "three cuttings" (*kvat'* < *kvat'ua* = to cut, to fell), i.e. "cut with three strokes."[2]

The Georgian Mountaineers also have their *Anator-i*.

(c) *Alòshkintr* (*alòskintr*).

These cakes are also put aside. The prayer now takes three new

* The combination *shw* represents a labialized variety of "*sh*"; cf. "*shw*", p. 120, note.*. In *ashwamkyat'* the "*sh*" is not only labialized, but also lingualized or lotized, which lingualization is not, however, represented in the transcription. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] By using the wooden knife, the Abkhasian probably pays tribute to that very ancient time when his ancestors used that kind of knife.

[2] If the first part *shwam* represents the Megrelian word "three", one should keep in mind not the "K'art'lianized" form *sumi*, but the original, Tubal-Kainian *shumi*; see Marr, *From the Journies to Svania* (in Russian), in *Khrist. Vostok*, ii, pp. 17–18. (Editor, *Khrist. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVihZhq

d-khwazhw and entreats god *Alòshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-k'warpà* (a thick broth of *d-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer. In the opinion of the commission, *Alòshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkhasian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight." [1]

The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri, vàri, khəzò, jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri* (*wàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khəzò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

(d) *Àmza-nəkwa*, Prayer to the Moon.

The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

* See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the pro/uction of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ʁ" (the ancient Arabic '*ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Aruiht* (cf. *Alkhinàr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Areia*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

Àmza, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, guard over our men! Grant them beauty and strength!" Simultaneously the men-folk crowd around him, for the moon is the god of men; the women-folk stand at a distance. "Increase our cattle and all our weal! Burn out the eyes of the spell-binders, and the tongues of the evil-speakers! *Wootsw, Wootsw!*" the supplicant continues his incantation and, calling to the cattle, spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà* or *a-k'wrpà*) now in the direction of the sea, now towards the mountains.

"The moon is a man, and the sun is a woman," say the Abkhasians.

I will now quote from my notes the following brief account of a very characteristic Abkhasian tale:

(1) "Seven very rich Abkhasian brothers had no sisters; whereat they were very aggrieved. Eventually, however, a sister was born, but from that moment the wealth of the brothers began to diminish; every night some invisible power drove away their cattle in herds. The youngest brother who was endowed with the gift of prescience (*ashàna*) said to the others: 'A demon has entered our house in the guise of our sister; if we do not kill him, our days and those of all in the whole district are numbered!' The brothers, however, would not listen to him. Thereupon he left his home, and travelled abroad, where he married a beautiful maiden-sun (*Àmra*). After several years, feeling home-sick, he set out to visit his brothers. Alas! what did he find? There was nobody left alive in the whole district except a mouse and his own sister-demon (the witch). She at once devoured his horse, and stepped aside to sharpen her teeth. On the advice of the mouse, the moon-brother, to save his life, took to his heels; he managed to inform his wife-sun of his misfortune, who hastened to deliver him. But the sister overtook her brother and began to devour him. By this time his wife Àmra had arrived. She pulled her husband, *Àmza*, towards her, but the demon pulled also; and so a deadlock ensued. *Anìswà* decided the matter thus: he allowed the wife-sun to have her husband, the moon, for fifteen days, and the demon to have him for the remaining fifteen days of the month. And from that time began the phases of the moon. As soon as the moon becomes full it means that the demon has begun to devour Àmza, on which account the moon diminishes gradually; towards the end of Àmza's life his wife, full of love, comes to the rescue of her unfortunate husband, and as her caresses and care restore him to life the moon waxes again. When it is full the demon reappears and the story repeats itself!"

(2) "The Eclipse of the Moon. During the eclipse a monster, Atv (*Àtwyo*), falls upon the moon to devour it. In order to save their

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

539 [789] benefactor, the moon, the Abkhasians fire at the monster and thereby drive him away." [1]

(3) The Moon and the Sun. A beautiful Abkhasian widow woman had a son and a daughter, who often absented themselves from home for the whole day; they would go off early in the morning and return only late in the evening. No amount of coaxing or tenderness on the part of the mother sufficed to keep the children at home or stop them from indulging in their daily adventure, so she decided to shadow them. She found they were seated under the shadow of an ancient oak, in a thick forest, enjoying themselves in an agreeable pastime with the moon and the sun. Before them were all sorts of eatables. The mother, flying into a passion, flung fresh dung at the moon and the sun. The sun-sister, being a more fastidious creature, washed herself, but the less particular moon-brother did not do so, and hence arose the dark patches on the moon; the brother, the moon, and the sister, the sun,[2] then soared up to the sky for ever, while the widow and her children returned home."

821 Here I will also note that the Abkhasians always welcome the new moon by looking at its reflection through a mirror, or over a silver piece.

[753] A certain mainly infantile disease, similar to convulsions, is called by the Abkhasians *àmzakra*, i.e. "to be caught by the moon".

(e) *Àmra-nə̀ħwa*, Prayer to the Sun.

796 [776] When he has finished the invocation addressed to Àmza (the moon), the supplicant takes the sun-shaped cake, and, with the women surrounding him, he says: "Thou, Àmra, *Àyt'ar intswakhwədù*, the great part of the great *Àyt'ar*, grant warmth, and caress the women of our family! Increase our cattle," etc., and then spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà*) in the usual manner, uttering *wootsw*.

According to D. I. Gulià, in the village of Dchilou they use the form *Amera* instead of *Àmra*.

(f) *Anàp'a-nàga*.

[776] After that the supplicant takes *alaħwàra* (a large mortar) and, addressing himself to the god *Anàp'a-nàga*, says: "Thou, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, send us the warmth of thine eyes and of

[1] Exactly what *Atòwyə* denotes is difficult to explain. In connection with the above quoted tale, the etymology of this word may, however, perhaps elucidate its significance. *Atò* denotes the barn- or screech-owl; *wy* may be the root from the word *a-owyò* (man); consequently *atòwyə* may denote "man-owl". And by *atòwyə* is, perhaps, understood the sister devouring the brother-moon.

[2] Their gender is often confused: sometimes the moon and the sun are sisters or brothers, sometimes the moon is brother and the sun sister.

[3] I think the Georgian word *mizezi*, cause, is derived from the Abkhasian *amzəz*, cause (from *àmza*, moon). (It is doubtful! Ed. *Khrist. Vest.*)

thy heart! Grant us such a crop of maize that at its gathering we shall have to bend the stalks with a hook (Geo. *Kavi*), and cut them down with a bill!" *K'uarpa* (*a-k'wərpà*) is then spilled, and the cattle is called by shouting *wootsw*. *Anàp'a-nàga* is the harvest god. In my opinion the etymology of these words is as follows: *Ap'ard* denotes "to twist or twine" something (a rope, for example), as well as "to pass with difficulty through something", for instance, a maize or millet field, crowd, etc.; *nàgara*—to carry: *inap'do indgo*—carriest thou by forcing thy way, by pushing asunder.

There is also an evil spirit of the harvest called *Jaja*, but we will speak of her (she is a goddess) separately, as she is not a member of this septenary.

(*g*) *Atchshò-shyashydna* (god of horses).

Finally, the supplicant takes the cake whose shape represents a horse (or three *à-khwazhwə*), and entreats (the god) *Atchshò shyashydna* —the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, to increase his horses (donkeys and asses). Again *wootsw* and *ak'warpà*. The word *atchshò* denotes horse; *shwyashydna* or *shashana* is incomprehensible.

With this ceremonial *Àyt'ar-nòhwa* ends.

Judging from what has already been said above, it is clear that *Àyt'ar* is the head of a whole pleiade of gods, each of whom constitute a special part of him; it is noteworthy that in every supplication addressed to any one of these gods, *Àyt'ar* is also invariably referred to as one whose part is the deity in question. The religio-philosophical mind of the Abkhasians has arranged the hierarchy of these gods in the following order:—

ÀYT'AR: JABRÀN, ZHWABRÀN, ALÀSHKINTÈ, ÀMZA, ÀMRA, ANÀP'A-NÀGA; AND ÀTCHSHÒ-SHYASHYÀNA.

Àyt'ar is one in seven parts. This conception of God in parts is prominently expressed in *Àyt'ar*.

(*h*) *Lòmilah* (*Nòmirah* or *Shòmirah*).

Àyt'ar-nòwha ends with *Lòmilah*. What this word denotes is difficult to explain. It appears to denote the god of conjugal happiness of the youth.

On the same evening, after the conclusion of *Àyt'ar-nòhwa*, the young people, boys and girls, meet at one of their houses, and begin to predict their fortunes. It is a time of laughter and gaiety, and the young people enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. *A-kwakwàr* of usual size is prepared in great quantities; and also enough of a smaller size, extremely salt in flavour, to enable each participant to have three. In one of these small *akwakwàr* is placed a hazel chip, called *dnasp'adsw*, "stake of happiness." Each person is given three

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZha

[196] [187] [574] small salt *akwakwàr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Làmilaĥ* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Làmilaĥ* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwàr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The [184] [241] *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. [184] [526] Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyəbir* (in Geo. *rikiap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a [139] yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abala*.

[171] [1] *Anasp'a dsw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dzadzola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), [192] accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission. [118]

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-satskhola*. The word *a-baia*, in Abkhasian *a-mərtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik iedki*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhaz RI3
Alzvibzha

1. *Adzərga-khwasha*

Either during the night before *baioba*, or, according to some members of the Commission, on the Wednesday evening of Passion-week, is observed the rite of binding legs with wool threads. Having supped early, the family retires to bed, each individual thrusting out his or her right leg from under the blanket. The eldest woman in the family stands on a stool in the middle of the room, and spins thread from wool. She does her work in silence. Having spun the required quantity, she quietly approaches the beds, and binds with this thread the right leg of each of their occupants, murmuring: "May God grant thee to see such days for a hundred years!" *Adzərga* (more correctly, *adzəga*) denotes a thick thread; *a-khwasha*—Friday, so that this rite was in former days, probably, observed on Fridays. The threads were afterwards burnt on the fire under the small cauldron in which was boiled the meat of the sacrificial animal, on Easter Day.

2. *K'wab-gharghar**

As soon as the binding ceremony was finished, the woman seized a copper cauldron, or a copper basin, and struck it like a gong, shouting at the top of her voice: "We have beaten! We have beaten!" The whole family then ran out into the garden, shouting *zhwakk'wat'weyt!* "We have beaten you (outstripped)!" The "beaten" neighbours, annoyed to find themselves "beaten", immediately fell upon them, and a mock battle ensued. The battle was fought, of course, entirely as a joke, and with great merriment. In ancient times, a whole village often went to "battle" against another, beating copper cauldrons and basins. The "battle" was followed by dances and fun-making continuing till the dawn. *A-k'wab* denotes cauldron of copper, *gharghar*, knock, rap, clatter of a copper cauldron or basin.

3. *Aqat'wara*

This Abkhasian term denotes the following superstition: an Abkhaz considers it a great misfortune if he hears the warbling or chirping of a swallow or the call of a cuckoo, before he has had his breakfast (or has at any rate partaken of salt); the bird will have "beaten" him, and this he regards as a great misfortune. In order to avoid this he eats salt, or something salt-flavoured immediately on rising from bed, which means that he has won the "contest".[1]

* The labial semi-vowel "w" in "k'w", "t'w", as also in "kw", "tw", etc., met with in this article, labializes the preceding consonant sound, the combination "k'w", "kw", etc., representing labialized varieties of "k'", "k", etc. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Georgians also have such a superstition.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *The Gathering of Medicinal Herbs*

On Maundy Thursday, young maidens, led by old women, go into a forest early before the dawn, to gather medicinal herbs. They must neither converse nor look back. When they dig out the herb, they throw salt into the soil, murmuring "*Àdgilə-dedop'al, bəkhwə bdl'eyt*, the Queen-Earth, we have returned to thee thy share". The following herbs are considered as particularly healing: (*a*) *ajmshyə-rshwəga, Arum albispatum*,[1] literally denoting: *ajmshyə*, eyebrow; *ashwəga*, "that with which they paint (a paint)"; it is used against diphtheria and scarlet fever; (*b*) *aztqyil* or *abgar ləmha, Aristolochia pontica*[1] (birthwort); the second Abkhasian term denotes, literally, "jackal's ear," used against erysipelas (St. Anthony's fire); and (*c*) *ajaqwa*, veratrum, according to Tchubinov (Geo. *Kharis-dziva*). Having finished gathering, they return home in silence and without looking back.

Maundy Thursday is called by the Abkhasians *tchatchkhadəl*, derived, in all probability, from the Megrelian *tsashkha didi*, "the great Thursday."

5. *Jaja*[2]

On Maundy Thursday the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the goddess of fruitfulness (of husbandry and horticulture) called *Jaja*. For this occasion the Abkhasian women prepare all sorts of lenten dishes, taking care always to include a pumpkin. The dishes are placed outside the house, in a corn-field, the offering to *Jaja* being accompanied by a supplication as follows: "The great *Jaja*! We have done all that was required of us, and have made the customary offering. We therefore humbly entreat thee to show thy bounty towards us and grant us a good harvest in the field and in the kitchen garden!" As I have stated before, the Abkhasians have no set prayer formulas, and each prays as best he can.

As always, the offering is left for a few minutes wherever it was placed, and the supplicants stand before it, and watch with emotion how the spirit of the goddess invisibly satiates herself with the gifts of men! Needless to say they themselves consume the "remains".

As I have already remarked, there are two Abkhasian gods of fruitfulness: the god *Andə'a-nəga* and the goddess *Jaja*.[3] *Jaja*, as imagined by an Abkhaz, is a broad-shouldered woman, of small stature. More than once Abkhasians have seen her wandering about the fields

[1] According to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden.

[2] It is of interest to elucidate what relation *Jaja* holds to Georgian *jojoba*; see I. Javakhishvili, *A History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian), p. 135.

[3] The relation of these two gods is difficult to determine; nor do we know the relation of *Jaja* to *Ayi'er*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

belonging to those who have failed to propitiate her, and muttering: 796
"Corncobs (of Indian corn) of a digit size, corncobs of a digit size!" 241
But if the owner of the field succeeds in frightening her and making her say *ràki, dzakì, ràki dzakì*, "of a cubit size," he will have a magnificent harvest.

On the day of *tchatchkhadəl*, after the offering has been made to *Jaja*, the seeds are taken for the first time into the kitchen garden.

6. *Àmshap'*

Easter Day is celebrated with great solemnity by all the 796
Abkhasians. It must be noted that the Abkhasians to-day have no notion whatever of the Christian conception of this day. Even the greeting, "Christ is risen," usual on this day, is wanting in the Abkhasian language. Everyone able to afford it has a new dress made for this day. To emphasize the poverty of a person the Abkhaz says, "Even for *Àmshap'* he could not get himself new clothes." This is almost the only day when an Abkhaz considers it necessary to send to church at least one of the members of his family. And the service in the church begins early enough to enable it to be finished by sun- [782]
rise. Everyone is in haste to be the first to light a wax candle and to [769]
place a painted egg on the graves of their dead. The Muhammadan Abkhasians also follow this custom, although they do not light the candles. It is known that Abkhasians bury their dead near their [764]
homes, in the places favoured by the deceased, and the graves, therefore, are scattered about the village. Owing to this custom the whole village is illuminated on this day of *Àmshap'*.

On this day each family must slaughter some animal. And those [782]
of the Abkhasians who follow the established custom of Paschal offerings, immolate two or three animals according to what his obligation is, what he "owes"—this word denotes "obliged", "must", "owes".

(*a*) *Antswakhwə* (or *Antswakwa*).

This is a compound word, consisting of *Antswà*, God, and (*a*)-*khwə*, part, share, and denoting "share of God", "for God", more exactly "to render to God that which is due to Him", briefly "praying to God". On this day most of the Abkhasians reverently offer up their prayers to God; but not all of them. There are families who are "not obliged" to render to God "His share". I have already mentioned 776
that the Abkhasian makes offerings only to those gods under whose power his parents or he himself had come, and thus had become his tributary, so to speak. Very often separate members of a family have, in addition to the general family guardian-gods, their own personal

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

guardians, whose power extends to his descendants, but not to those of his brothers or sisters. In the village of Adzvibzha almost everyone is obliged to carry out this " praying to God ", Christians as well as Muhammadans.

Every Abkhaz keeps in his cellar, in honour of " God ", a special pitcher filled with must of the very best grade. However great his need, an Abkhaz will not, for any consideration in the world, open this " sacrificial " pitcher until the celebration of the cult of " praying to God ".[1] Early in the morning, on returning from the church, the head of the family surrounded by the male members of his household, sacrifices a young he-goat over the " sacrificial " pitcher, and entreats " the great God to receive graciously the humble offering made by him in accordance with the instructions of his forefathers . . ." He humbly entreats the Great God " punish us not for our faults and trespasses ", etc. After this the meat of the immolated goat is boiled, and sacrificial wheat-cakes are baked. All this is taken down into the cellar, and placed in front of the sacrificial pitcher. The members of the family kneel down, while the head of the family reverently cleans and opens the pitcher, and, holding in his left hand a hazel stick upon which the heart and liver of the goat are transfixed, he prays *Antwsa-du* (to great God) that He grant him and his family a long and happy life. In his prayer he never fails to mention that they are performing the rite " in the manner they were taught by their fathers and grandfathers ". Afterwards he fills a glass with wine from the pitcher and pours it on the heart and liver and the sacrificial cakes; he then passes the latter, with the wine, three times over the heads of the supplicants who are kneeling down, and says: " Grant us the warmth of Thine eyes and of Thine heart! Protect us from all infirmities and sickness." Then follows again the libation of wine Now they all rise, turn round from right to left, and each places a piece of frankincense on burning coals. For a few minutes they all stand still humbly, while the great God " receives " their offerings, and then, with strict observation of order of seniority, a glass of wine and a small piece of the heart and liver is given to each of the participants. It should be noted that only the household members are allowed to partake of these sacrificial offerings. Even the married daughters of the family are treated as strangers, and they are not allowed to share in the offerings with their husbands and children. It is sinful even to think of the sale of the wine. In most of the families the female sex is generally forbidden to partake of this offering.

Thus do the Abkhasians perform annually the domestic offering to God of " His share ". But every three to five years each Abkhas

[1] The same applies to other " sacrificial pitchers " referred to below.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 · RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

is obliged to present "His share" (offering) to God, in a forest, for which purpose a clearing is chosen under the shadow of a tree, oak or yoke-elm. Here is offered usually a castrated goat the age of which is equal to the number of years since the Abkhaz last prayed in the forest. Women are not allowed to take part in this rite, although they help to prepare the sacrificial cakes. The prayer is said by the elder of the *gvari*, who receives the hide of the immolated animal. The offering takes place in front of *ashwamkyát'* (described above). The prayer ceremonial is the same as in the case of the domestic offering, although the pitcher of wine kept in the cellar is not used; for the purpose of the oblation a little wine is brought in a smaller pitcher. All the men in the neighbourhood participate in the ceremony, and when it is over they seat themselves on the grass; herbage is placed in front of them, and on this is served the dinner. A small piece of the heart and liver of the immolated animal is given to each of the participants. All the sacrificial food must be consumed on the spot; nothing may be taken home. The horns of the victim are hung high above the *ashwamkyát'* and left there. Three legs of *ashwamkyát'* are then cut, and the assembly disperses.

Some families dedicate to *Antswakhwò* cows which are let loose with perforated ears (see above, p. 125); these cows are called *adzatwò*, which is difficult to translate; it apparently denotes "pledge", "security". Bullocks born of these cows are offered in sacrifice in place of castrated goats.

(*b*) *Aylòr-nòkha.*

On the same day, simultaneously with *Antswakhwò*, a sacrifice is offered to *Aylòr-nòkha* (*Ilòr-nòkha*). The ceremony of offering the sacrifice is exactly similar to that described above. There is the same "wine pitcher", goat, cakes, and the same manner of praying. Also, at certain intervals, the sacrifice is made in the woods, in the manner described above. Many keep *adzatw* cows in honour of the Ilori icon. The only difference being that women have a freer access to these offerings than to *Antswakhwò*. Here I will note that if the pitcher for the "sacrificial wine" becomes in any way damaged (even if only slightly chipped), a new one, larger and dearer, must be substituted without fail. This is a general rule for all pitchers of this kind.

Aylòr-nòkha (*Ilòr-nòkha*) denotes the "icon of Ilori". This appears to be the same icon of St. George, which is kept in the small, walled-in church of the village of Ilori. This village is situated on the seashore, three miles from Otchemtchire. What is this Ilori icon? Which saint does it represent? For what is this saint remarkable? The contemporary Abkhaz has no notion whatever. The masses do not know to this day that it is the image of St. George. All they know

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

778 is that the Ilori "icon" is omnipotent, and they, therefore, try hard not to incur its wrath. It is inflexibly just and punishes harshly those who deviate from the law; it is a goddess of equity, as it were; a
778 kind of Themis, and in the practical life of the southern Abkhasians
627 and of the Samurzaqanoans, there is, therefore, no "saint", no
[690] "icon", no deity equal to the Ilori "icon"; it determines finally and irrevocably all matters, whether civil or criminal, which the crown court has not been able to settle to the satisfaction of the popular idea of fair play. Even in the case of matters upon which judgment has been passed by crown courts, but where the decision has not satisfied the disputing parties, appeal is made to its tribunal. The trial is conducted as follows: A kind of arbitration court is set up which imposes upon
[782] the accused the obligation to take a propitiatory oath before the Ilori "icon". If the matter is unimportant it is determined by a village tribunal which provides one or two co-swearers; but if the matter is serious (insult to one's honour, murder, etc.) the representatives of the parties participate in the trial with the judges. "Swearing in" follows, but the number of co-swearers increases; thus, for instance, 1–2 *t'avadi-s*, 2–3 *aznauri-s*, 5–6 peasants, 1–2 namesakes, 1–2 maternal relations, 1–2 relations of the female line of the *gvari*, etc., are frequently appointed as co-swearers. The oath is administered on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*. The accused swears before the icon that he is innocent, the co-swearers confirm his declaration, and there the matter ends. If the accused is unable to take the oath, he submits obediently to the punishment imposed upon him. From the day of the taking of the oath onwards the plaintiff breaks off all relationship with the defendant and his co-swearers. "The icon is between us (parts, separates us)," says the orthodox Abkhaz. It is impossible to evade this custom; it is an Abkhasian's profound conviction that infringement of this custom (the re-establishment of relationship), as also
[626] a false oath, will not pass unpunished; the "icon" punishes with
[753] sickness and even with death, if the accused does not come to his senses in time and confess himself in the wrong. At the death of all the members of the guilty family, the wrath of the "icon" recoils on the plaintiff. To avert the chastisement of the "icon", as of Abkhasian gods in general, the guilty person must pray and make offerings to the "icon"; he must also compensate his opponent's material losses and obtain the latter's consent thereto; they both set out for Ilori with gifts, prescribed by sorceresses, and they pray there to the "icon" for forgiveness of their sins; they bring goats, bullocks, and money. This is called the reciprocal forgiveness-prayer (*eyba-nə̀ẖwara*). From this day normal relations are restored between the parties. If one of the parties does not agree to make peace, the other party can *akhə-dchəkhə̀ra*, "buy back his head," i.e. redeem

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

himself, by placing before the "icon" also the amount he was to pay to the opponent.

Muhammadans also take the propitiatory oath at Ilori, together with the Christians.[1]

There are many stories current about the power of the Ilori "icon" to work miracles. I learned one of them from the lips of Biram Tkhazou and Seyt Zhania.

"In ancient times the Ilori 'icon' determined all the disputes of human mortals in the following manner. High up in the centre of the church, hung the golden scales of Justice. Under these scales stood the suitors, praying zealously to the Ilori 'icon', who inclined the scale over the head of the righteous. Knowing this, Abkhasians would not venture to break the law or wrong one another; peace and happiness reigned upon the earth. But men are cunning; an impious Abkhaz decided to deceive the great Ilori 'icon'. He owed a neighbour of his a hundred *manat'i* (= rubles) which he would not pay. The creditor complained. They both went to Ilori. When they appeared before the 'icon', the debtor handed to his creditor his staff which contained the hundred *manat'i*. The scale inclined towards the creditor, thus acquitting him of the charge. He took back his staff and left the church. The Ilori 'icon' was 'offended' and because of this fraudulence on the part of one Abkhaz it punished the entire people: the 'icon' took the scales of Justice to heaven for ever."

In ancient times the Ilori "icon" provided oxen for itself on the eve of the wake festival. The Commission assured me that eye-witnesses of this miracle were still living in Abkhasia, but none knew their names. As this providing of the oxen is described by A. Lamberti in the manner in which the Abkhasians relate it to-day, I will quote the description from his work.[2]

"On November 20th[3] they celebrate St. George's Day. A superstition prevails among the people that this celebrated martyr, on this day, procures for himself an ox from the neighbourhood and brings it by night into the Ilori Church dedicated to him. This church is held in great esteem, not only by all the Megrels, but by the neighbouring peoples also. Therefore it is very rich in gold and silver[4]—the icons are all made of these metals and are adorned, too, with precious stones; and even the doors are mounted in thick sheets of silver. So revered is this church by all the people, that, although situated

[1] In Northern Abkhasia *Dsdsvap'sh* is endowed with a similar power.

[2] A. Lamberti lived as a missionary for eighteen years in Megrelia (1635–1653), and, according to him (and also to other sources), the present-day southern Abkhasia (Abahua) constituted then part of Megrelia, the northern boundary being the River Kodor.

[3] The 10th of our (old) style.—N. J.

[4] At the present time, too, it is the wealthiest and the most influential of all the churches of Abkhasia.—N. J.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

[189] [539] [1198] in a distant country place and near the sea-coast, thieves have never entered there, nor has any enemy ship raided it or despoiled it of its wealth. Indeed, so highly is this saint (the Ilori 'icon') honoured, that not only would the valuable contents of the church not be stolen, but, even if precious stones were scattered *outside* the church, in its vicinity, no one would touch them. (It is the same even to-day, N.J.) In addition to the local population, this saint is also feared by the Abkhazes,[1] and even by the Turks, deprived though they are of the light of Christian religion. They all worship, and fear, this sacred object (the 'icon', N.J.) . . .

" On November 20th, the Prince (of Megrelia, N.J.) goes to the Ilori Church accompanied by his court officials, nobles, and the people of Odishi (i.e. Megrelia), to participate in the feast of the 'ox'. Not only do the Odishians go there on that day, but also the Abkhazes and Svans, in great numbers. The church is enclosed in stone walls [346] about the height of fifteen spans. At its entrance are large gates surmounted by a beautiful campanile containing many bells. On the eve of the feast, in the dusk of the evening, the Prince, accompanied by a large retinue of bishops, princes, and nobles, rides up to these gates, orders them to be locked, then seals the keyhole with his own seal and returns home. The following morning, before dawn, the Prince, accompanied by the same retinue, again rides up to the gates. When they have assured themselves that the seal has not been tampered with, the Prince removes the seal and opens the gates. Within the Church walls, the ox is found. At the sight of this miracle, the people, with great fervour, offer up their thanks to St. George, and the church bells ring out the glad tidings of the miracle all over the country-side. Everyone is firmly convinced that St. George himself provided the ox and led it with his own hands into the enclosure. Also, it is said, the saint leads the ox thrice from the mountains to the sea and back, and offers the ox, thus sanctified, to the people as a gift . . .

" A long time ago, so it is said, an unbeliever (the Abkhazes say that he was a Muslim from Trebizond, N.J.) came here from a country many hundreds of miles away from Odishi. After witnessing the miracle and how the people celebrated the occasion, this obstinate man not only disbelieved, but began to mock the Christians, telling them that they were light-minded and foolish enough to believe anything. In spite of his attitude, the people tried to persuade him to embrace the true Faith of Christ, and unanimously affirmed that all the miracles of St. George were really true. 'Very well, then,' said he, 'I will do this. At my home, two hundred miles away, I have an

[1] In Ilori the Megrelian language prevails to this day; many, however, know Abkhasian also.—N.J.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkha's RI3
Adzvibzha

ox of a certain colour. If the miracles you talk so much about are true, it should be an easy matter for St. George to bring my ox into this church to-night; then, certainly, I will gladly embrace your Faith.' The condition was accepted. On the following morning, early, on opening the gates, there was found within the enclosure an ox which the unbeliever recognized as his own. Thus he was convinced of his error, and embraced the Christian Faith."[1]

(c) *Indl-qwùba.*

The *T'avadi*-s Marshania, and all those Abkhasians who descended from the mountains (Dsabalaa, Dalaa, Pskhvu, etc.), offer sacrifices (a ram, without fail) in exactly the same manner to a sanctity, *Indl-qwùba*, instead of to the Ilori " icon ". I could obtain no information of any kind about this " icon ". Everybody I questioned gave the same answer: *Indl-qwùba* is equal in power to *Dodòrəp'sh* and the Ilori " icon ".

These offerings are performed early in the morning, and serve as breakfasts. Every Abkhaz slaughters some animal for the meal (the favourite one is a castrated goat), it is often prepared on the Saturday. They also pay the customary Paschal visits. After the midday sacrificial meal they all go to the public square, where they indulge in games, chiefly football. During Easter week they also organize horse racing, the most popular sport of the Abkhasians.

7. *The Second Day of Easter*

This is a commemoration day. A variety of dishes are prepared, all of which are placed on a table by an open window. The eldest of the family, holding a candle and a glass of wine in his hands, prays to the souls of deceased relatives that they grant his family peace and happiness. Then follows the pouring of wine on the meat and wheat dishes. The whole family stand behind the supplicant. After the prayer each member approaches, places a piece of frankincense on burning embers, and pours wine on the food. Here stands too a smoking pipe. All remain seated in silence, in order that the souls of the deceased ancestors may eat in peace.[2]

The Abkhasian, as has already been stated, have no Paschal greeting such as " Christ is risen ". They welcome each other with a kiss, saying: " May God grant us that we meet again next year," to which the other replies: " And for a hundred years."

[1] Quoted from the Russian and Georgian translation of A. Lamberti's *Relatione della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia nella quale si tratta dell'Origine, costumi e Costumi naturali di quei Paesi.* Published in Naples, 1654.

[2] This rite will be described in detail in my work *The Cult of the Ancestors.*

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

8. *Thursday of Easter Week*

(*dsatchə̀khur, mardydni t'argyalàz*)

796 On the Thursday of Easter week the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice [796] to *dsatchə̀khur, mardydni t'argyalàz*. I do not know what the first word denotes. *Mardydni* is the Megrelian *mardiani* (Geo. *madliani*) and denotes "beneficent", "blessed", "abundant"; while *t'argyalàz* is derived from the Georgian word *mt'avar-angelozi*, archangel; it is not clear, however, which of the archangels is meant. According to the explanation of the Commission, this "icon" punishes the offending family by causing the death, in particular, of children. "If there are children in the family, it does not touch the adults," commented the Commission. Sacrifice to this "icon" is always offered by an oak tree. On the Thursday, early in the morning, sacrificial cakes are baked, and the whole family repair to their oak, which is usually situated nearby within the enclosure. Everybody kneels, [780] facing eastward, and the head of the family makes a bloodless offering consisting of *akwakwàr* and cakes, and entreats the great Dsatchkhur, the beneficent T'argialaz, to forgive them their trespasses, voluntary or involuntary. *Àämen* say the whole family. The oak tree is decorated [794] with pieces of many coloured stuffs, some fastened with nails and [778] some with wax. This oak is sacred and to fell, damage, or defile it is strictly forbidden.

On the same day, in the evening, but this time at home, the family [780] make a blood offering to *T'argyalàz*. A fattened capon is immolated and cakes are again baked. Some families keep pitchers with "sacrificial wine" in his honour.

"In ancient times when people were not so depraved, T'argialaz [789] procured for the day of offering a wild he-goat as his victim," Osman Kamkia informed me, "just as the Ilori 'icon' procured an ox. Now he no longer does so, for we are not worthy of his favours!" concluded the old man, sighing. The peasants Kamkia are *me-khat-ur-n-i* (Geo.), i.e. "attendants of the 'icon'." They keep a little cottage (*p'atskha*) [778] where the "god" is supposed to dwell invisibly. A money-box is kept in the cottage, into which the faithful drop copper coins used exclusively for the purchase of sacrificial offerings.

An old Megrelian, whose name has unfortunately become effaced in my note-book, told me the following:—

778 "The all-powerful and miraculous icon, Dsatchkhur, was removed 789 by the Svans from the Salkhino church, and taken to Svanet'i, where it remained for a long time; in the end, however, moved by pity for the Megrelians, the icon returned of its own accord and alighted on an oak which stands on the picturesque hill of Salkhino. Near this

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nəhwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nəhwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *guari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nəhwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nəhwa* (*anəhwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateyna, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
'Adzvibzha

Notes and Considerations concerning Chapter II

1796 It is of great interest to determine which pagan cult approximates, under the name of *Àmshap'*, to Easter, the day of the Resurrection of Christ. I. Javakhishvili states in his well-known *History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian) that, according to Dubrovin, the Abkhasians called *Àmshap'* also *Mizitkhu*. In my opinion this is another form of the Abkhasian word *məzəkhwə̀*, i.e. " part of the moon," derived from *ànəza*, moon, and *a-khwə̀*, dole, part, share. If this supposition is correct, *məzəkhwə̀* would denote " to give to the moon its share, part ", i.e. " praying to the moon." [1] It should be noted, however, that neither the members of the Commission nor anyone whom I questioned knew anything about this name of *Àmshap'*. It is to be assumed that this name was noted down from the lips of the Mountaineers among whom it had evidently been preserved. In further support of the possible close connection between *Àmshap'* [1916] and the moon cult (and the " tree spirit ") there is also the fact that the most important role in these festivals is assigned to St. George of Ilori, to which saint, as Javakhishvili has proved in his aforementioned work, is assimilated the moon cult. The procuring by this saint of a bullock, its " purification " by leading it three times from the mountains to the sea and back, the dedication to him of the cow *adzàtwə̀*, and, finally, the Gurian name of *zhwabrən*, *Iloroba*, prove that St. George is closely connected with the Abkhasian pleiade. Here is yet another curious fact. In the village of Bandza there is a church dedicated to St. George and called Shourkari. There still exists here the following custom : On the Monday [2] following Low Sunday, after the domestic offering, the populace repair to the church, and on their way, singing *Kyrie eleison*, they uproot a tree without the use of any implement, carry it three times around the wall enclosing the church, and offer it to St. George. The tree is then left within the church enclosure until the next year when it is replaced by a fresh one. This, in my opinion, symbolizes the victory of St. George over the moon (= *t'ut'a* in Megrelian, and over the " tree ").[3] Such a custom also [1917] prevails in the village Opshkvit'i, in Lower Imeret'i, where on the 23rd April the populace offers, in the same manner as at Bandza, a tree to St. George.[4]

1796 Judging from the description of *The Supplication of the Leybaa*, 1911 by the priest N. Pateyna, which has been preserved in its purest state,

[113] [1] Cf. N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, p. 133 (or its translation in this Journal, pp. 178–6.)

[2] " Monday " in Megrelian is *t'ut'askhàs*, that is, the day of the moon (I. Kipshidze, op. cit., s.v. *dghe*). Noteworthy is Lamberti's description of the fear of the moon by the Megrelians.

[3] According to the information given me by Sh. P'aghava and El. Ot'khmezuri.

[4] *O-pshkvit'-i*, judging from its form, is of Megrelian origin.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzhq

 796 171

Wednesday was the day of the prayer to the tree spirit, with both the Abkhasians and the K'art'vels (and Megrels),[1] which is partly confirmed by the Megrelian name of this day, i.e. *jumashkha*; the latter consists of *juma* and *shkha* (Geo. *dghe*). What does the first component word denote? May it not be derived from the Abkhasian word *ajəma*, she-goat? The Pshavs have preserved the more salient *jumaghis jvari*, wherein *jumaghi* = *ajəmagh* denoting "goat-seed, goat-male", he-goat. This term may have been obtained from the custom of the Abkhasians of dedicating, or offering, exclusively, a goat to the tree spirit. This supposition finds further confirmation in the legend of Dsatchkhur, which procured exclusively for its festivals the wild goat (male).

One may also note the concordance between the names of some days in the Megrelian language, and the fact that it is just on these days that the cult is observed of those gods to whom these days are dedicated. Thus on the Monday (*t'ut'ashkha*) the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the moon; on the Wednesday (*jumashkha*) they observe the cult of the tree, and on the Tuesday (*t'akhashkha*) the cult of the mother-earth.[2]

III. Nàn-ħwa

The Abkhasians call the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin 796 (15th August) (*a*) *Nàn-ħwa*.[3] They observe with great reverence both *Nàn-ħwa* and the Lent of the Assumption. With *Nàn-ħwa* are connected the following superstitions of the Abkhasians:—

(*a*) *Àwyəst'aă-lə̀khəra* (Meg. *Dchindchat'oba*)

Abkhasians associate the night before the 1st August with 789 increased activity on the part of evil spirits *àwyəst'aă*, demons; and [776]

[1] N. Janashia evidently here uses *k'art'vel* as a generic term, including Megrels, but etymologically and linguistically such use of the term is definitely inadmissible. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The last two comparisons are made by the author, because for *jumashkha* he had also another etymology in connection with the Abkhasian *a-j*, oak, with which he identifies the Megrelian *ja*, tree; while in the first part (*t'akha-*) of the word *t'akhashkha*, he saw the Megrelian *dikha*, earth, soil. These doubtful etymologies have been eliminated. On the other hand, cf. *nertchi*, in I. Kipshidze's *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v., where this term is interpreted as "the basis of something, or the ground on which a house stands", and since the prayer dedicated to *nertchi*, or "master, lord" *nertchi*, as to a kind of deity, cannot be performed in a house with a wooden floor, I. Kipshidze concluded "that *nertchi* is god of the earth", in which supposition he was to a certain extent supported by definitions of the same word, given by lexicographers (S. S. Orbeliani: "the external side of the bottom"; Tchubinov (I): "bottom, the lower part of a vessel"; Tchub (II): "the lower part of the vessel, of the pitcher"). These materials N. Janashia supplements in his letter, dated 16th April, thus: "In Imeret'i *nertchi* denotes ceiling (see also V. Beridze, *Sitqviskona*, The Dictionary, s.v.), while in Megrelia, on the other hand, the rite is known under the name of *p'udseshi do nertchish khvama*, 'the praying of the foundation and ceiling' if not 'of the floor'." (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[3] In my opinion *Nan(an)* denotes mother, and ħwa, "says" (from *aħwara*, see above, p. 124, note 2), that is, "for the mother," "the mother's day."

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvib2hq

they, therefore, take precautionary measures to avoid becoming victims of the malignant will of the evil spirits. Nothing is left outside the house, or in the courtyard; nobody sleeps out of doors. To safeguard themselves from evil spirits, the superstitious attach pieces of wax to their hair. Crosses are made from *a-lakẁmha* (Geo. *lekumkha*),[1] to which are appended acanthus leaves, and these are placed at the courtyard gates, house doors, the gates of the kitchen gardens and cornfields, the poultry and cow-houses, etc. Acanthus leaves are hung around the necks of the domestic animals. The Abkhaz is convinced that *dwyəst'aă* dare not approach these crosses, which are also a protection against evil eyes.

During this night the evil spirits go out to look for booty, under the leadership of their mother, *Arapàp* (Meg. *rokapi*). On this expedition they are joined by human beings in whom evil spirits have taken their abode. Some of these evil spirits ride wolves or cats, and devour all the animals left outside by their owners who had no time, or had forgotten to drive them into shelter.[2] All evil spirits without exception stir abroad during this night; they wander growling from village to village and through the forests. For this reason it is easy to find out and catch them, and with this object youths go into the woods, where they make a large fire, using the wood of *a-lakẁmha*. The youngsters hide behind the bushes and watch out to see if they can recognize those of their neighbours into whom an evil spirit has entered. It is believed that the demons never pass a bonfire without stopping and warming themselves a little by it. Often quarrels arise on this ground, with unpleasant consequences. This custom of seeking after the evil spirits, "demons," is called *Awyəst'aă lbkhəra*, which denotes "the catching of the demon"; it is also known under the Megrelian name of *dchindchat'oba*. To this day an Abkhaz believes that an evil spirit can enter into, and remain in, a human body, particularly in that of an old woman.

The chief *dwyəst'aă* is the eldest son of the sister of God, and that is why He, being a blood relation, cannot destroy him, although he may frighten him off with thunder. Here it will be appropriate to quote the following popular story:—

"At the time of the partition of the work between God and the devil, the former, exercising the right of seniority,[3] suggested to the devil that they should divide the world between them. The latter

[1] The Russian *krushina*, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, that is, *alaternus* (R. Eristov mentions the plant *lekukha*, but he does not explain it. Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*).

[2] To safeguard an animal from wild beasts when he strays in the forest, they "bind the mouth" of the wild animals as follows: a pair of scissors is tied and a suitable prayer is uttered. "A sure remedy."

[3] The younger divides, and the elder chooses.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

agreed. During the night God caused the earth to be covered with luxuriant vegetation. Captivated by the beauty of vegetation the devil suggested to God that the best way to divide the world between them would be for one to have the earth and the other the vegetation. God took as his share the earth, and the devil received the vegetation. God then ordered him to remove his vegetation immediately. Only now did the devil realize his mistake, which, however, he rectified thus: he restored the vegetation to God, and in return for it he begged and obtained from Him the right to the souls of those who fall from the trees, having climbed them without first praying to God for their safety. . . ."

(b) *Barbanjia* (*dchiakohona*)

Before sunset on the 14th August the Abkhasian youths light, in their respective courtyards, a fire of flax straw (at present, owing to the lack of this straw, they use dry fern, etc.). Each person leaps thrice through the flame of this fire, shouting "I have burnt the evil spirit; I have burnt the evil spirit". By so leaping through the flame an Abkhaz "purifies" himself of the evil spirit. After they have leapt three times through the flame each throws a piece of salt into the burning fire, and then, altogether, they begin to beat the fire with sticks to extinguish it, at the same time shouting the above quoted words. At the conclusion of the whole operation, the neighbours inform each other of their victory over the evil spirit by firing a gun. This manner of destroying the evil spirits is called "the burning of the demon" or *Barbanjia*. The denotation of the word is incomprehensible to me.[1]

(c) *Nǎn-ĥwa*

On the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, the "pure" (eldest) woman in the family prepares *a-tcha* ("a round bread stuffed with cheese"), boils a cock, and leads the whole family into the kitchen garden. Here they all kneel in front of the blossoming cucumber vine, and the eldest woman makes offering to Nan, saying: "the great Nan (*Nǎn-du*)! We who offer thee this sacrifice, established by our ancestors, humbly entreat thee to have mercy upon our house: increase it like the stars in the sky!" etc. The kneeling family repeat with her, *Ǎmen*. But no one knows who *Nan* (*Anan*) is; they only know that she is a goddess of procreation of the human race. Of the Mother of God there is no knowledge whatever.

[1] The Georgian equivalent is *Dchiakohona*, which is observed on Ash-Wednesday. *Dchiakohona*, according to Tchubinov, denotes "the leaping through the fire on Wednesday of Passion-week".

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

796 On this day also they " lay the table ", that is, prepare a dinner,
[969] for the souls of the deceased, unless the day happens to be one of abstinence, i.e. Wednesday or Friday. In the latter event the feast takes place on the following day.

(e) *Àdsyla-nə̀ẖwa*

On the same day of the Assumption is observed *Àdsyla-nə̀ẖwa* (cf. II (10)). The children are taken to a meadow where they are told to place their right legs against a tree. Each holding an *akwakwə̀r* in the right hand, they remain meekly in this position until the eldest in the family has addressed the prayer to " the spirit of the tree ", entreating " the great part of the deity of the tree " to safeguard them from giddiness, from falling off the tree, and from injuries. The children must eat their *akwakwə̀r* without removing their legs from the tree.

(f) *Anàna-gùnda* (the goddess of bees)

796 This is both a spring and a summer feast.
231 In the spring, when the bees begin to hive, the eldest (" pure ") woman of the family takes some hirse (Geo. *p'etvi*) and an egg, and
[791] enters the apiary, where she passes the offerings three times over the hives, and prays to the goddess of the bees, *Anàna-gùnda :* " Submitting these as a pledge that the established offering will be made at the proper time, I humbly entreat thee, *Anàna-gùnda*, to be the guardian of our bees ; safeguard them from all illnesses, multiply them, and grant them a good crop ! " Hirse and the egg are hung over the apiary.

In the summer, between the 15th July and the end of August, before the gathering of the first honeycombs, more during August, on a Thursday or Saturday, the promised offering to the goddess
[780] *Anàna-gùnda* is made. A large corncake (*a-mgal*), stuffed with cheese, is baked, and placed on one of the hives ; also an egg. The family kneel in front of the offering, and the " pure " woman again invokes the mercy of *Anàna-gùnda* upon the honey bees, and says an improvised prayer. The family repeat a long drawn out *ə̀mən*.

After the ceremony, she divides the corncakes crosswise, into four parts, with two strokes of the knife ; and cuts these into smaller pieces. The family sit down there and then and dine. They do not
[621] forget the neighbours, sending a small piece each. The remains are placed in a basket and hung up in the apiary. Everybody passing by is obliged to enter the apiary and bless the honey bees and, scattering about a little hirse, eat a piece of corncake.

[178] In ancient times when the Abkhasians irreproachably observed all the rites, the gods were more merciful to them. Thus, the goddess

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Thus, the goddess
of the bees as a sign of her good disposition towards a given family 231
placed an egg (the egg of *Anàna-gùnda*) in one of the hives. No matter 776
how much honey they took from that hive, there would always be a plentiful supply of it.[1]

IV. K'IRSA

Christmas is one of the four chief holidays[2] of the year. Abkhasians 796
call it *K'irsa* (Megr. *K'irsa*), which denotes Christ. An Abkhaz considers it a great disgrace if he fails on this day to kill a goat or some other animal. On this day "the table is laid" also for the souls [769] of ancestors.

(a) *Agwə-nə̀hwa*

For some families it is obligatory to make an offering early in the morning on this day to *Agwə-nə̀hwa*, for which *akwakwər* are baked. The supplicant entreats that *Agwə-nə̀hwa* grant them the warmth of his eyes and his heart. In translation the word denotes, "praying to heart." This "praying" is also known to the Gurians, [171] under the name of "praying for the womb" (Geo. *Mutslis salotsavi*); Megrelians call it *Khatsitsi*.[3] According to I. Kipshidze, it is the New Year's Day breakfast.[4] In my opinion it is nothing more than a survival of the supplication described below.

(b) *Got'anùa* (*sharp'ə-nə̀hwa*)

Some *gvari*-s have preserved to this day the following custom. On Christmas Eve, the family go to bed very early; they rise, however, at midnight, and begin praying. Enough chickens are killed to provide [262] one for every member of the family (blackbirds also may be used), [782] or in their place a young goat; *akwakwər* baked. All this is offered to *Got'anùa*; the food is consumed immediately after the prayer is ended, and the remains, if any, are not left but burnt without fail. All return to bed. The dawn must find them asleep. In Megrelian *got'ànua* denotes morning-twilight, dawn, to grow light, to dawn, the Abkhasian equivalent of which is *sharp'-nə̀hwa*, the morning prayer; the Megrelian term, however, is more in use.

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family,

[1] *Anàna*, in my opinion, is derived from *an*, mother; *gùnda*, probably from *gundi*, a swarm, a collection of something.

[2] Namely, the New Year, Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas.

[3] *Khatsitsi—khatsitsi* is called also a bride. (Cf. I. Kipshidze, *Gram. of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. *khat'itsi*.) (Ed. *Khrist. Vostok*.)

[4] *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. (where is also a reference to the explanation of the same word in Georgian by V. Beridze, *Sitqvishona*, s.v., Ed. *Kh. V.*).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzv16zha

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family, being angry with her masters, took a portion of the dough for *akwakwar* destined for the " god " *Got'anùa*, and placing it in a scoop of bitter-gourd (*akwapey*, Geo. *kopè*), hid it in the loft. As usual the family went to bed after the ceremony. But unfortunately for them the offended *Got'anùa* soundly thrashed all of them, using for the purpose the very same scoop in which had been hidden the dough destined for himself. This *gvari* makes propitiatory offerings at the will of sorcerers to *Got'anùa* twice a year, during the night before Christmas and before the Assumption.

Got'anùa, under the name of *Okhvàmuri*, evidently spread throughout Megrelia during the missionaryship of Lamberti.[1]

V. Deities whose Cults have no Fixed Dates

1. *Et-nèkha—Àga-nèkha*

The sea, like other manifestations of nature, has its own " part of deity ", called *Àga-inkhwè* or *àga-intswakhwè*. An Abkhaz makes an offering to this deity when he goes to the sea coast for any considerable time. The sea deity is not to be trifled with ; if it is slighted it becomes turbulent, it surges, and punishes the unrespectful. Therefore even the children are forbidden to throw pebbles, or to spit into the sea. The worship of this deity has been preserved in its purest form among the Bzib Abkhasians, namely among the peasantry of the Gudout (Gudaut) district, of the *gvari* of Amp'aràa. It has been described by A. Tch(ukbar), in *Sotrudnik Zakavkazskoy Missii* (" The Collabarator of the Transcaucasian Mission "), 1912, p. 373 sqq., where the deity *Et-nèkh-Àga-nèkha* is called *Et-nykh Ag-Nykh*. *Àga* denotes sea, *(a)nèkh*—" icon." But what does the word *Et* denote ?[2]

2. *Àshkha-intswakhwè* (god of mountains)

Mountains also have " their part of God " known under the name of *Àshkha-intswakhwè*. *Àshkha* denotes mountain ; *intswakhwè*, " his (of the male rational being) part of God." I have pointed out above that the Abkhaz often uses the word *nèkha* in the sense of god, which in the Christian faith is understood, or more correctly, translated, as icon. The god of mountains " governs " all the mountains and the beasts inhabiting them. Abkhaz shepherds make offerings to this god twice a year, in the spring when they drive the cattle to the mountains, and in the autumn when they drive them back. To him are subject also mountain game. In order to preserve the game from

[1] A. Lamberti, op. cit., pp. 148–9.

[2] This word manifests a consonance with the Assyro-Babylonian name of the god of the sea, *Ea*. Is this a mere coincidence ?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

their enemies, the god ordered the bird *aqaqab* to watch over them; the Megrelians who have the same belief, call this bird *kakabi*.[1] As soon as this bird sights at a distance a hunter or some other enemy, it soars high up into the sky, and by screeching warns the game of the approach of danger. That is why this bird is always found near the beasts.

The god of the mountains demands respect. He punishes severely those bold enough to bathe in clear, transparent mountain streams. The Abkhaz shepherds do not, therefore, bathe in these streams, being afraid of drawing upon themselves the displeasure of the god of the mountains: the nude body is said to defile the waters of the mountain spirit.

3. *Azhwèyp'shaă* (gods of beasts and hunting)[2]

Azhwèyp'shaă are gods of beasts and of hunting. They dwell in impassable forests, and lead an ordinary family life. To them are subjected all game, and without their will no one can shoot bird or beast. These gods kill for themselves some wild animal, boil and eat its meat; they wrap the bones in its skin and then revive the animal by striking it with a wand. Only after an animal has been resurrected in this way is a hunter granted the right to shoot it, and then only the particular hunter for whom the gods have destined it: no one else, try as much as he will, can kill it. Of this the Abkhasians are aware, and they employ the following characteristic greeting when they encounter a fellow hunter: *zp'sì-aakhèw yùzp'shùr*, "Which is destined to die, that (animal) is waiting for thee!" the answer being, "For both of us is waiting!"

A few words may be said about the way in which Abkhasians divine the success or failure of their hunting on the day of the Assumption. Before starting out the hunter takes a sharp knife and repeatedly strikes the table, cutting nicks in it. Passing his palm over the table, he says: "Whether thou sayest fifteen, whether I say fifteen, whoever says fifteen (it will be) thirty, fifteen." If the nicks thus cut number exactly fifteen it is a good omen; the gods will reward him with game.

The Abkhasians learnt this method in the following manner. A hunter once followed a wild goat, but he could not shoot it. It led him into the thick of a wood, where he saw a huge cauldron, around which sat gods. They invited him to join them. Nearby stood a goat. They killed the latter and invited the hunter to partake of the meal. When the gods began to throw bones into the hide, the hunter concealed one of them, putting in its place a small stick (or a small knife,

[1] The word is consonant with the Georgian *Kakabi*, partridge.
[2] The term is construed as plural.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

224 539 according to another version). The gods revived the goat and destined it to fall a prey to our hunter. On the following morning, on his way back, he sighted a wild goat, killed it, and to his horror and amazement in its body he found his stick (knife).[1]

These *azhwėyp'shaă* have eternally youthful daughters, who often have love affairs with the hunters whom they reward with plenty of game. They select bachelor hunters as their object of love. One of them, however, once fell madly in love with a married Abkhaz; their friendship lasted for many years; often she herself visited him. One day, at dawn, the hunter's wife found the daughter of the gods, whose beauty was more than earthly, in the arms of her husband. The two were asleep on the balcony of the corncrib. A light breeze had disturbed the golden curls of the lovely goddess, and a few tresses lay in the dust. The wife acted in a manner born of pure love and sympathy. Quietly approaching the sleeping couple she lifted up the golden curls of the beautiful goddess and placed them so that they would not fall into the dust. When the goddess awakened she was so struck with the magnanimity of the beautiful wife of her beloved that she restored her husband to her, and forever forbade her sister-goddesses to have love affairs with married men.

224 Hunting is a sacred sport to the Abkhasians, and it is the custom never to talk of the hunter when he is hunting, but to say, if necessary, "he has gone somewhere." The hunters divide their prey into equal proportions; the head of the animal or bird, however, is given in addition to the one who killed it. Anybody whom the hunters encounter by chance also gets an equal share. Nor are the neighbours forgotten. Each goes up to the prey, and sprinkling it and also the successful hunter with some grain, says: "May gods grant thee a better one on another occasion!"

[536] Any kind of falsehood or evasion of the rules of hunting consecrated by custom is severely punished by order from above. The following story may be quoted as an illustration of this:—

[539] A well-known hunter once killed a wild goat, and another hunter, having heard a shot, ran up to him. The successful hunter said: "Behind that corner there is hiding another goat which you can easily follow up; it will be better to take home a kill each than to divide one between." The second hunter ran in the direction indicated but found no goat there. For this lie the gods punished not only the hunter himself but also his whole *guari*; they have never since shot a single head of game.

[1] This story is written down from the words of A. Kardava, a Megrelian shepherd. In his version the wild boar figures instead of the goat, and *tqashi-mep'a*, king of the woods, instead of *Azhwėyp'shaă*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *Àbna-intswakhwò* (god of the woods)

The woods also have their "part of deity", *Àbna-intswakhwò*. *Àbna* denotes wood, forest; *intswakhwò* we already know. When an Abkhaz enters a forest, or if he has to pass a night there, he prays to this deity for protection. I have, however, failed to collect more information about this god of the woods.

Àbna-wowyò

In ancient times the forests of Abkhasia were inhabited by *Àbna-wowyò*, "forest-people." *Àbna* denotes forest, and *a-wowyò*, man. They were strong and courageous, but very ugly in appearance. Their bodies were covered with bristle-like hair. From their breasts projected a strange object, shaped like an axe and strong as steel, which served as a weapon; and by pressing an enemy to their breasts they could cut him into two. They preyed incessantly upon the people, who, however, in the long run, and with God's help, destroyed them. The last of them dwelt in an impassable forest, called Urak', near the village of Adzvibzha. In the same forest there lived also the courageous Khukhw Dchit'anàà, with his herd. Between Khukhw and this "forest-man" there was intense animosity. The ugly "forest-man" would come to Khukhw's hut every midnight, and inquire: "Dchit'anàà Khukhw,[1] art thou at home?" "Yes, I am. If thou art not an old woman come and fight me," responded the fearless Abkhaz. The "forest-man", however, would never agree to a single combat. Khukhw, tired at last of these childish pranks, resorted to a ruse. Placing a log in his bed, he went outside and hid behind a bush not far from the hut. At midnight the "forest-man" came as usual, and receiving no reply, he concluded that Khukhw was soundly asleep. Entering the hut and seeing, as he thought, the sleeping form of his enemy, he was about to aim a blow at the log, when the Abkhaz, who had crept in unawares, fired a shot at him. The "forest-man", although mortally wounded, managed to crawl away, and on the following morning Khukhw followed up the blood-stained footprints, and finding the dead body of his enemy, buried him with due honours. Khukhw appropriated the wealth of the last "forest-man", and also married his beautiful wife. . . .

5. *Atswaqwa*, the rainbow

The god of the rainbow is very vindictive; he soars high in the clouds and punishes, either by death or the infliction of disease, all

[1] A peculiarity of the Abkhasian: the surname precedes the Christian name.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzhq

who transgress against him. In order to avoid incurring the anger of this god, an Abkhaz will not draw water or wash himself when the rainbow is in the sky, and is generally careful about the use of water. Like any other god, *Atswaqwa* may bestow the " warmth of his eyes and his heart ", in return for offerings and prayers. Whoever is affected by his wrath, grows icteritious, emaciated, to save his life he must, at the direction of the sorceresses, make the following offering to the rainbow god :—

On one of the Thursdays [1] the old (" pure ") women take the sick person to the river, pass (Geo. *shemoavleben*) around his head 4–5 yards of variegated chintz, and pray : " The great god ! Acknowledging his transgressions this sick person (the name is mentioned) has appeared before thee, and humbly entreats thee to accept this chintz as a pledge that he will perform the established offering at the proper time, at the direction of the sorceresses ! "

On the following Thursday he is taken again to the same river and place. Usually three women say the prayer, but there may be seven. Men, with the exception of the patient, are not allowed to be present at this ceremony. The sick person is dressed entirely in white. The eldest woman [2] kills a capon and a hen ; women carry out all the duties, preparing *ashwamkydt'*, " *ghomi* " (millet pudding), *akwakwar*, and *atcha-gvazdl* (Geo. *ghvezeli*, an oblong bread), of each of which there must be seven of the usual, and seven of the very small size. All these are placed on *ashwamkydt'*, on which also burn seven wax candles. The prayer is said by the eldest woman. The patient kneels in front of the offering ; he is taken home immediately the ceremony is over, and he must not look back. The seven small *akwakwar*, *atcha-gvazdl*, and seven small portions of *ghomi* (*abzst'a*—millet porridge), are thrown into the water ; they represent the share of the female slaves (*aht'ap'hwas*) of the rainbow god. Everything else is consumed by the women themselves ; the remains being thrown into the river, for nothing must be taken home.

Muhammadans must also burn candles at this offering. The candles are fixed on a kind of hoop made of grape vine. At the end of the ceremony the hoop with the burning candles is thrown into the river.

It should be noted that in some parts of the country this god is called *Atswaqwa-elia* (the Rainbow-Eliah). So at least he was called, according to the testimony of D. I. Gulia, by Javaz, the famous woman supplicant.

[1] Thursday in Megrelian is *txenbba*, the day of the sky. It is noteworthy that the Abkhasians perform usually on the day of the sky, the majority of rites that are seemingly connected with the sky, as in the case given.

[2] The Abkhasian women kill animals only on occasions of certain offerings.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

6. *Akhyə Zoshən*

The Abkhasians ascribe diseases generally to supernatural influences or gods, but some diseases have their own special gods. The god of small-pox, for example, is *Akhyə Zoshən* (the golden Zoskhan), and also his consort, the goddess *Khanla Shkwədkwa* (Khania the white). How important are the gods of the Abkhasians may be judged from the following circumstance which took place during the spring of 1914 in one of the settlements of the village Jgerdi. Throughout the winter and spring of the year Abkhasia was in the grip of a severe epidemic of small-pox. In order to check the spread of the disease vaccinators were sent to the affected areas. The following account of what happened was described to me by P. Janashia, one of the vaccinators. A certain settlement, fearing that the gods might wreak vengeance upon them, refused to admit the vaccinators; they preferred to safeguard themselves against this terrible disease, *atswarp'shdzə* (small-pox), by the adoption of the gods. *Atswə* denotes skin, rind, and *ap'shdzə*, pretty, beautiful; the whole, in translation, denoting "that which decorates (beautifies) the skin".

By pooling their resources, the settlement raised enough money to buy a couple of snow-white goats and a sufficiency of provisions, and made an expedition into the forest. Here, amidst the quietude and peace of over-hanging leaves, a sumptuous feast was prepared for the divine guests. When everything was ready, and the victim had been placed, according to custom, on *ashwamkyadə'*, the head of the settlement said the prayer and made the offering to the gods. Nearby stood two bedsteads, adorned with silk bedclothes, on which sat two young women, an *aznauri* and a peasant woman; their naked breasts were covered with silk handkerchiefs. The whole assembly knelt down, while the head of the settlement implored the gods to accept their offering by kissing the breasts of the most beautiful women of the settlement, and thus become, in accordance with the ancestral custom, adopted sons of the settlement. Near the "foster-mothers of gods" stood two of the finest horses, one with a side saddle. The sumptuous feast followed the ceremony of adoption, and afterwards the people, holding the horses by the bridle, on which were to be riding the newly adopted gods, *Akhyə Zoshən* and *Khanla Shkwədkwa*, escorted the precious guests to the accompaniment of song, far away from the settlement. Thus they "turned away", or warded off, the small-pox.

"You may not believe it," an Abkhaz from the settlement told me, "but this 'adoption' saved us from the small-pox; not one of us fell a victim to it. You, the learned, have caused our ruin by bringing down upon us the anger of the gods of our fathers," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3

Nos. 4 & 5 AUTUMN, 1937

GEORGICA

A JOURNAL OF GEORGIAN AND CAUCASIAN STUDIES

RUSTAVELI VOLUME

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Frontispiece.	
Rust'aveli and His Poem. G. Gvazava	3
The Personality and Outlook of Shot'a Rust'aveli. Prof. I. Javakhishvili	10
The Popularity and Influence of Shot'a Rust'aveli. G. Leonidze	13
T'eimuraz I and His Poem "The Martyrdom of Queen K'et'evan". (1 Plate.) Z. Avalishvili	17
On the Origin of the Georgians. Prof. C. F. Lehmann-Haupt	43
The Art of War in Georgia. I. Nanuashvili	80
Antiquities of Georgia. (26 Plates.) Prof. E. Taqaishvili	96
The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians. N. S. Janashia	117
Note on the Caucasian Snow-Partridge. W. E. D. Allen	154
On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians. Prof. N. Y. Marr	157
An Account of the Georgian Monks and Monasteries in Palestine. (3 Plates.) Archimandrite Gregory Peradze, Ph.D.	181
The Ḫurri-lands. Arshak Safrastian	247
Life and Work of Y. N. Marr, jun. B. Nikitin	278
The Abkhasian Name of the Supreme Being. Simon Janashia	287
The Caucasian Counterpart of an Old Egyptian Racing Chariot. (1 Plate.) L. Muskhelishvili	290
The Battle of Aspindza. Jacob Gogebashvili	293
The Thoughts of a Warrior. General G. Kvinitadze	306
Review—*Iz istorii drevney metallurgii Kavkaza*	312
The Society for Palæo-Mediterranean Studies	322
The Georgian Alphabet. A. Gugushvili	324

PUBLISHED FOR THE GEORGIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BY
STEPHEN AUSTIN & SONS, LTD., HERTFORD

Price, £1 2s.

[title page]

All rights reserved

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE ABKHASIAN NAME OF THE SUPREME BEING

By Simon Janashia

Atranslation of the article published in Georgian in *Dselidsdeuli*—The Year Book, of the Georgian Philological Society, Tiflis, 1923–4, vol. i–ii, pp. 69–73.]

IT was Uslar who first observed that the Abkhasian name of the Supreme Being was in the plural.[1] He even quotes an example, i.e. *antswà dəuk'wa*,* the great God, lit. (*les*) *dieux grands*, in which the appearance of the adjective in the plural definitely testifies that, in the conception of the speaker, the ancient religious ideas—according to which God was not of one, but of many parts—were still in existence. The author remarks " only heathen Abkhasians say this ", the Chirstian and Muhammadan Abkhasians conceiving God quite definitely as the One, absolute Being. 776

Such an assertion was, perhaps, an excusable mistake on the part of the distinguished linguist, who was an orthodox Christian. It is impossible to divide the Abkhasians into such groups on the basis of their religious beliefs, despite the fact that formally they belong either to the Christian Church or to Islam. The example quoted by Uslar is probably one of those fortuitous discoveries whereby there suddenly emerges from the routine of ordinary usage a product of the national-spiritual creativeness belonging to the depths of the remote past. [771]

Later, the same opinion (about the plural form) was put forward by Dcharaia[2] and Janashia.[3] The latter, however, thought that the word in question may have originated from the same *an*-root which in Abkhasian denotes the *mother*-notion.

Professor Marr shares only the first part of this view: he writes,[4] " . . . of great interest is the word *an*, god, which, in Abkhasian, appears usually as the plurale tantum *antswà*, God, lit. ' gods '."

In the summer of 1921, while in Abkhasia, in the village Adzvibzha (in Abzhua, the Kodor district), where I was sent by the Tiflis State University on a philological research study, I was able to collect certain data which threw more light on the question, as will be seen. 121

In the course of my research work, I was able to establish the validity of the formation of the word in question by the discovery

* For the pronunciation of *tsw* and *k'w*, see p. 118, n. *, and p. 131, n. *. (Translator's note.)

[1] Uslar, P. K., *The Abkhasian Language* (in Russian). Tiflis, 1887, p. 78. [113]

[2] Dcharaia, P., *On the Relation of the Abkhasian Language to the Japhetic Languages*, in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics* (in Russian), St. Petersburg, 1912, vol. iv, pp. 31–3.

[3] Janashia, N., *The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, in *The Christian East* (in Russian), St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue i, pp. 74–5. [See the English translation in this number, pp. 118–9. Ed.]

[4] Marr, N., *From a Linguistic Journey to Abkhasia* in *Isvestiya* (Bulletin) of the Imperial Academy of Sciences (in Russian), St. Pb., 1913, vol. vii, No. 6, p. 315.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibZhq

of an analogical formation in a *sh*-root- (= creating, to create, whence the verbal noun *ashará*) word *ashatswá*, which represents an epithet of a deity, and is equivalent to Georgian *gamtcheni*, creator.[1] I have not heard this word used apart from its association with the word God. This root is usually used in its past-participle form. A popular Abkhasian expression is *antswá-hazsház*, Creator God, but the following phrases are also in common use:—*ashatswá irshaz*, by the Creator (lit. creators') created (said of something very pleasing), and *ashatswá irmshaz*, by the Creator (lit., creators') not created (said of something unpleasing). In these examples *ashatswá* is understood to be in the plural, which is unmistakably borne out by the pronominal particle r (*i-r-shaz*, *i-r-mshaz*) which indicates the plurality of the subject (the determinative word in our examples).

It may, however, be argued that the phrases just quoted are composite, and that the particle indicated, a fossilized morphe which has lost its meaning. We will therefore quote another phrase, *nas ashatswá irshàma art'*, "Is it possible that the Creator (lit. creators) created these?" (it was said of the animals), in which *ashatswá* is directly represented as the subject in the plural. This word, and the notion conveyed by it, must have simultaneously undergone the same metamorphosis as the basic name itself, i.e., they must have lost first the intrinsic and then the formal meaning; it became a simple plurale tantum, for instance, in the widely used name for a kind of sacrificial animal, *ashatswá-dzatwə*, the Creator's (lit. creators') sacrificial animal, in which we should have had, in accordance with the rules of the Abkhasian compound word-formation, the form *ashatswá-rdzatwə*. . . .

It is clear that in this case the result of the acute conflict between old and new ideas, and in connection with it, between dead and living forms, is far less definite than in the case of *antswá* itself. The changes to which the latter has been subjected have been more rapid; but nevertheless, owing to language inertia, we find facts which reveal the original meaning of the process of word-formation. One such fact, quoted by Uslar, is given above. Of no less interest, in my opinion, is an example I found: the heroine of a story which I noted down, bears the following name, *antswá rt'əp'hà khánkwla*, that is "God (‖ gods)-their-daughter-Khakula" in other words, the god's daughter Khàkûla (Khàkûla being a girl's name). The same pronominal particle r (*r-t'əp'hà*) explicitly indicates here that for the remote ancestors of the speaker, God represented the union of numerous forces.[2]

[1] In Megrelian, *odabade*. See Janashia, *The Abkhasian Cult and Mode of Life* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, St. Pb., 1916, vol. v, issue 3, p. 168. Also Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 132.

[2] See also Dcharaia, op. cit., p. 32.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvi6249

Finally, it has already been noted[1] that this peculiar religious conception—in accordance with which, not only the supreme beings of the national pantheon, but even the elements (personified, of course), are forces of many parts, each one endowed with its own particular aspect, with its separate parts, must have been common to all the Georgian tribes proper. Thus, for instance, in the Summer of 1921, I heard, in the village Eredvi (in the district of Gori) the following expression:—*mashin gagvidsqra tchveni dsili ghmert'i*, "Then our part of god was angry with us"; and this year, in Tiflis, I overheard in the street:—*bnelashi ver vitsani, ai, ase venatsvale tchem dsil ghmert's*, "I did not recognize (him or it) in the dark, I swear by my part of God."

[1] Janashia, *The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, p. 75. [English translation, p. 119. Ed.] Expressions such as "my part of God", "my part of the Icon", are quite common among the Abkhasians. Of interest, in this connection, is the curse *ùmtsakhu tswaat*, "may thy part of fire burn out." According to Mr. Marghania (Maan), the Shepherds in Abzhua, when grazing their sheep in the mountains, pray to the Marshania-s' part of God (*Marshyànaa rentswakhwe*, because the guardian-god of these mountains is supposed to be the god (or part of god) of the Marshania *gvari*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE ABKHASIANS

(From the materials on Abkhasian ethnography)

By N. S. JANASHIA

[A translation of the article published in *Khristianski Vostok*, The Christian East, Petrograd, 1915, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 72–112.]

FOLLOWING the suggestion of N. Y. Marr that I should revise and translate into the Russian language my notes on "Materials on the ethnography of the Abkhasians", published 16–17 years ago in Georgian periodicals, chiefly in the journal *Moambe*, I made a careful review of all the collected "Materials", whether printed or still in manuscript form. In order to make the revision more complete I invited the aid of a special Commission from the Abkhasians of the village Adzvibzha, where the materials in question were actually collected. 114

The Commission consisted of the following persons: Mrs. Gidcha Janashia, my mother, with whose help the materials were checked originally; Kharikhan Tchengelia; Kelamat Delba, an eighty-year-old man, possessing a perfect knowledge of Abkhasian; Abdakhw Lolua, an orator; Alexis Dopua, who has a wide knowledge of tales and legends; Mushagw Tchengelia; and Alexis Janashia. The Commission worked with me for two days, the 2nd and 3rd July, 1914. 115

Furthermore, being still doubtful about certain aspects of my task, I checked the materials again at the meeting of the Adzvibzhuaans, during the month of August, and I found that all agreed in the main, differing only in matters of detail. One of my chief difficulties was that members of the Commission refused point blank to tell me tales I wanted to have in connection with my object, because "it is forbidden to tell tales in the daylight!" I therefore found it very hard to verify tales I had formerly taken down. So strong is the power of superstition nurtured for centuries! I am convinced that much that is incomprehensible in my "materials" would have been susceptible of explanation in the light of these tales. 124 [538] [128]

All the ceremonies and rites herein presented are described by a man who has taken an active part in their observance; at first, during his childhood, when he was imbued with profound religious feeling, and later in life when, although no longer professing "faith", he approached them with the greatest interest with a view to their study. I have endeavoured to record all the details, discovering in them curious survivals preserved through the popular beliefs and customs of the Abkhasians. In my opinion these details represent invaluable material for the scientific study of religious observance. 123

I was at one time very much tempted to use the material I had 121

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *àntswa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1926, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE ABKHASIAN NAME OF THE SUPREME BEING

By Simon Janashia

[Atranslation of the article published in Georgian in *Dselidsdeuli*—The Year Book, of the Georgian Philological Society, Tiflis, 1923–4, vol. i–ii, pp. 69–73.]

IT was Uslar who first observed that the Abkhasian name of the Supreme Being was in the plural.[1] He even quotes an example, i.e. *antswà dəuk'wa*,* the great God, lit. (*les*) *dieux grands*, in which the appearance of the adjective in the plural definitely testifies that, in the conception of the speaker, the ancient religious ideas—according to which God was not of one, but of many parts—were still in existence. The author remarks " only heathen Abkhasians say this ", the Chirstian and Muhammadan Abkhasians conceiving God quite definitely as the One, absolute Being.

Such an assertion was, perhaps, an excusable mistake on the part of the distinguished linguist, who was an orthodox Christian. It is impossible to divide the Abkhasians into such groups on the basis of their religious beliefs, despite the fact that formally they belong either to the Christian Church or to Islam. The example quoted by Uslar is probably one of those fortuitous discoveries whereby there suddenly emerges from the routine of ordinary usage a product of the national-spiritual creativeness belonging to the depths of the remote past.

Later, the same opinion (about the plural form) was put forward by Dcharaia[2] and Janashia.[3] The latter, however, thought that the word in question may have originated from the same *an*-root which in Abkhasian denotes the *mother*-notion.

Professor Marr shares only the first part of this view: he writes,[4] " . . . of great interest is the word *an*, god, which, in Abkhasian, appears usually as the plurale tantum *antswà*, God, lit. 'gods'."

In the summer of 1921, while in Abkhasia, in the village Adzvibzha (in Abzhua, the Kodor district), where I was sent by the Tiflis State University on a philological research study, I was able to collect certain data which threw more light on the question, as will be seen.

In the course of my research work, I was able to establish the validity of the formation of the word in question by the discovery

* For the pronunciation of *tsw* and *k'w*, see p. 118, n. *, and p. 131, n. *. (Translator's note.)

[1] Uslar, P. K., *The Abkhasian Language* (in Russian). Tiflis, 1887, p. 78.

[2] Dcharaia, P., *On the Relation of the Abkhasian Language to the Japhetic Languages*, in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics* (in Russian), St. Petersburg, 1912, vol. iv, pp. 31–3.

[3] Janashia, N., *The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, in *The Christian East* (in Russian), St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue i, pp. 74–5. [See the English translation in this number, pp. 118–9. Ed.]

[4] Marr, N., *From a Linguistic Journey to Abkhasia* in *Isvestiya* (Bulletin) of the Imperial Academy of Sciences (in Russian), St. Pb., 1913, vol. vii, No. 6, p. 315.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE ABKHASIANS

(From the materials on Abkhasian ethnography)

By N. S. JANASHIA

[A translation of the article published in *Khristianski Vostok*, The Christian East, Petrograd, 1915, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 72–112.]

FOLLOWING the suggestion of N. Y. Marr that I should revise and translate into the Russian language my notes on "Materials on the ethnography of the Abkhasians", published 16–17 years ago in Georgian periodicals, chiefly in the journal *Moambe*, I made a careful review of all the collected "Materials", whether printed or still in manuscript form. In order to make the revision more complete I invited the aid of a special Commission from the Abkhasians of the village Adzvibzha, where the materials in question were actually collected. 114

The Commission consisted of the following persons: Mrs. Gidcha Janashia, my mother, with whose help the materials were checked originally; Kharikhan Tchengelia; Kelamat Delba, an eighty-year-old man, possessing a perfect knowledge of Abkhasian; Abdakhw Lolua, an orator; Alexis Dopua, who has a wide knowledge of tales and legends; Mushagw Tchengelia; and Alexis Janashia. The Commission worked with me for two days, the 2nd and 3rd July, 1914. 115

Furthermore, being still doubtful about certain aspects of my task, I checked the materials again at the meeting of the Adzvibzhuaans, during the month of August, and I found that all agreed in the main, differing only in matters of detail. One of my chief difficulties was that members of the Commission refused point blank to tell me tales I wanted to have in connection with my object, because "it is forbidden to tell tales in the daylight!" I therefore found it very hard to verify tales I had formerly taken down. So strong is the power of superstition nurtured for centuries! I am convinced that much that is incomprehensible in my "materials" would have been susceptible of explanation in the light of these tales. 124 [538] [128]

All the ceremonies and rites herein presented are described by a man who has taken an active part in their observance; at first, during his childhood, when he was imbued with profound religious feeling, and later in life when, although no longer professing "faith", he approached them with the greatest interest with a view to their study. I have endeavoured to record all the details, discovering in them curious survivals preserved through the popular beliefs and customs of the Abkhasians. In my opinion these details represent invaluable material for the scientific study of religious observance. 123

I was at one time very much tempted to use the material I had 121

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE ABKHASIANS

(From the materials on Abkhasian ethnography)

By N. S. JANASHIA

[A translation of the article published in *Khristianskii Vostok*, The Christian East, Petrograd, 1915, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 72–112.]

FOLLOWING the suggestion of N. Y. Marr that I should revise and translate into the Russian language my notes on "Materials on the ethnography of the Abkhasians", published 16–17 years ago in Georgian periodicals, chiefly in the journal *Moambe*, I made a careful review of all the collected "Materials", whether printed or still in manuscript form. In order to make the revision more complete I invited the aid of a special Commission from the Abkhasians of the village Adzvibzha, where the materials in question were actually collected. 114

The Commission consisted of the following persons: Mrs. Gidcha Janashia, my mother, with whose help the materials were checked originally; Kharikhan Tchengelia; Kelamat Delba, an eighty-year-old man, possessing a perfect knowledge of Abkhasian; Abdakhw Lolua, an orator; Alexis Dopua, who has a wide knowledge of tales and legends; Mushagw Tchengelia; and Alexis Janashia. The Commission worked with me for two days, the 2nd and 3rd July, 1914. 115

Furthermore, being still doubtful about certain aspects of my task, I checked the materials again at the meeting of the Adzvibzhuaans, during the month of August, and I found that all agreed in the main, differing only in matters of detail. One of my chief difficulties was that members of the Commission refused point blank to tell me tales I wanted to have in connection with my object, because "it is forbidden to tell tales in the daylight!" I therefore found it very hard to verify tales I had formerly taken down. So strong is the power of superstition nurtured for centuries! I am convinced that much that is incomprehensible in my "materials" would have been susceptible of explanation in the light of these tales. 124 [538] [128]

All the ceremonies and rites herein presented are described by a man who has taken an active part in their observance; at first, during his childhood, when he was imbued with profound religious feeling, and later in life when, although no longer professing "faith", he approached them with the greatest interest with a view to their study. I have endeavoured to record all the details, discovering in them curious survivals preserved through the popular beliefs and customs of the Abkhasians. In my opinion these details represent invaluable material for the scientific study of religious observance. 123

I was at one time very much tempted to use the material I had 121

/6 cont./

175 And since the male line of the Abkhaz kings was cut off with the death of the blind king Theodosius II, the Abkhaz kingdom, by right of the closest relation to that house, together with the appanages of the Bagratids of Samtskhe, was united with the Grusian kingdom, and Bagrat III assumed the title of the Grusian and the Abkhaz King. Since that time the Catholicoi of Mtskheta have assumed the title of the Catholicoi "of all Georgia" and sometimes "of all Georgia and Abkhazia." In the florescent period of Grusian history (tenth to twelfth centuries) all Abkhazia and especially its coastal parts were covered with towns, monasteries, churches, and fortified castles. From the end of the 177 175 fifteenth century on, i.e. upon the fall of Byzantium and the replacement of the cross in the Hagia Sophia by the crescent, Mohammedanism gradually began to spread in Abkhazia; this trend was further favored by the circumstance that in that same century Georgia, weakened and ruined in the century-old struggle with the Mongols and later with the Persians and Turks, broke up in the fifteenth century into three kingdoms (Kakhetia, Kartlia, and Imeretia) and five principalities (Samtskhe, Svanetia, Mingrelia, Abkhazia, and Guria); moreover, the Turks subjugated Adzharia and began to spread Mohammedanism there. At this time also the Caucasian mountaineers (Lezgi /Lezgin/, Chechen, North Osset, Circassians, and others) renounced Christianity and accepted Mohammedanism. Georgia, surrounded on all sides by Mohammedanism, managed with difficulty to preserve her religion, but weak and small Abkhazia was unable to do so; Mohammedan doctrine spread widely there and would have completely swallowed up Christianity if the Georgians had not in good time called the Colossus of the North to the defense of all the ancient aborigines of the Caucasus.

• 127 In the compilation of the present ethnographical sketch of Abkhazia, the author has used as source-material and texts the following articles by Abkhazians: 1. "Abkhaziya i Abkhaztsy /Abkhazia and the Abkhaz/," an ethnographical sketch by P. Giorgidze, published in Iveriia, 1888; 2. "Abkhaziya," /7/ an ethnographical sketch by K. Madchavariani, in the newspaper

/7 cont./

127 Droeba, 1884-1885; 3. "Ocherk Abkhazskoy mifologii /Sketch of Abkhaz Mythology/," by verovaniya abkhaztsev /Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A., in the Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh, No. V; and 5. "Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie tuzemnago naseleniya Sukhumskago otdiela /The Economic Condition of the Native Population of the Sukhum District/," same author, in the same Sbornik, VI.

M. Dzhanashvili. April 25, 1892, Tiflis.

/8/

ooo

I.

Abkhazia and the Abkhaz

The Abkhaz -- His Character -- Robberies, Raids, and Thieving -- Eloquence of the Abkhaz -- Blood Vengeance -- Love of Homeland -- Hospitality, Politeness, and Friendliness -- Honesty -- Values -- Folk Games -- Poetry.

142 The Abkhaz is a mountaineer of medium stature, slender, swarthy, with black hair and eyes. He is fearless, brave, and
181 proud, but at the same time capricious and extremely quick-tempered. Besides his inborn giftedness, his beauty, and, in general, the likeable aspects of his character, he also exhibits quite a few negative traits, of which we shall speak below.

579 Since the most ancient times the Abkhaz have been known as the most fearless and daring of robbers. They constantly raided their neighbors, pillaging and ruining them. For that matter, the habit of robbing and raiding is common to all the mountaineers in general. "Without robbery and raids, life is not worth living to a mountaineer," says Sergei Mech in his work. All his poetry, all the beauty of his existence is in this trait of the mountaineer. Only the tiger can be compared to the mountaineer in the suddenness and swiftness of his attack on a sleeping village in the deep, dark night. Going for plunder, the mountaineer is sure that

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE ABKHASIANS

(From the materials on Abkhasian ethnography)

By N. S. JANASHIA

[A translation of the article published in *Khristianskí Vostok*, The Christian East, Petrograd, 1915, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 72–112.]

FOLLOWING the suggestion of N. Y. Marr that I should revise and translate into the Russian language my notes on "Materials on the ethnography of the Abkhasians", published 16–17 years ago in Georgian periodicals, chiefly in the journal *Moambe*, I made a careful review of all the collected "Materials", whether printed or still in manuscript form. In order to make the revision more complete I invited the aid of a special Commission from the Abkhasians of the village Adzvibzha, where the materials in question were actually collected. 114

The Commission consisted of the following persons: Mrs. Gidcha Janashia, my mother, with whose help the materials were checked originally; Kharikhan Tchengelia; Kelamat Delba, an eighty-year-old man, possessing a perfect knowledge of Abkhasian; Abdakhw Lolua, an orator; Alexis Dopua, who has a wide knowledge of tales and legends; Mushagw Tchengelia; and Alexis Janashia. The Commission worked with me for two days, the 2nd and 3rd July, 1914. 115

Furthermore, being still doubtful about certain aspects of my task, I checked the materials again at the meeting of the Adzvibzhuaans, during the month of August, and I found that all agreed in the main, differing only in matters of detail. One of my chief difficulties was that members of the Commission refused point blank to tell me tales I wanted to have in connection with my object, because "it is forbidden to tell tales in the daylight!" I therefore found it very hard to verify tales I had formerly taken down. So strong is the power of superstition nurtured for centuries! I am convinced that much that is incomprehensible in my "materials" would have been susceptible of explanation in the light of these tales. 124 [538] [128]

All the ceremonies and rites herein presented are described by a man who has taken an active part in their observance; at first, during his childhood, when he was imbued with profound religious feeling, and later in life when, although no longer professing "faith", he approached them with the greatest interest with a view to their study. I have endeavoured to record all the details, discovering in them curious survivals preserved through the popular beliefs and customs of the Abkhasians. In my opinion these details represent invaluable material for the scientific study of religious observance. 123

I was at one time very much tempted to use the material I had 121

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

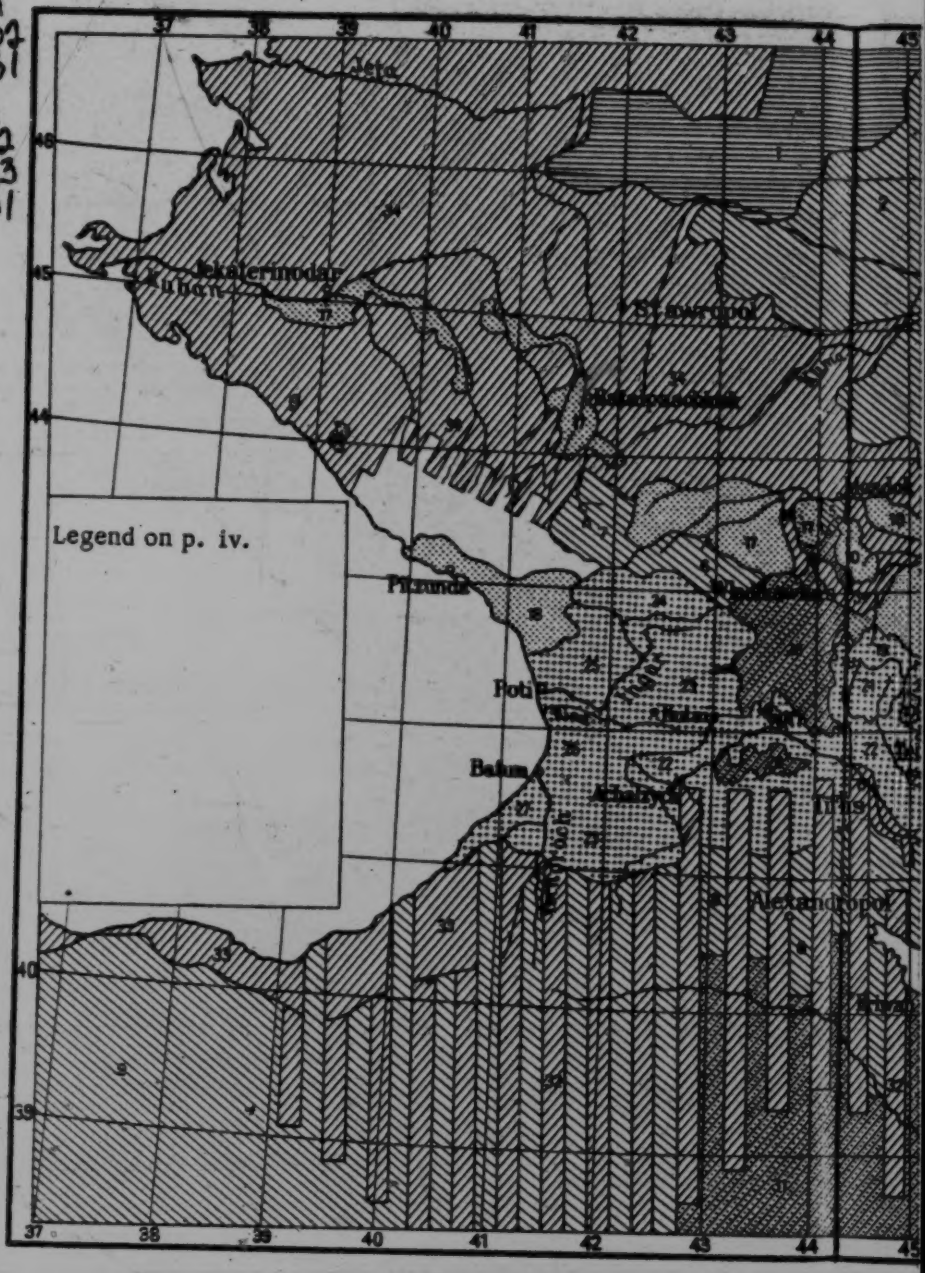
I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *àntswa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*s*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1926, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

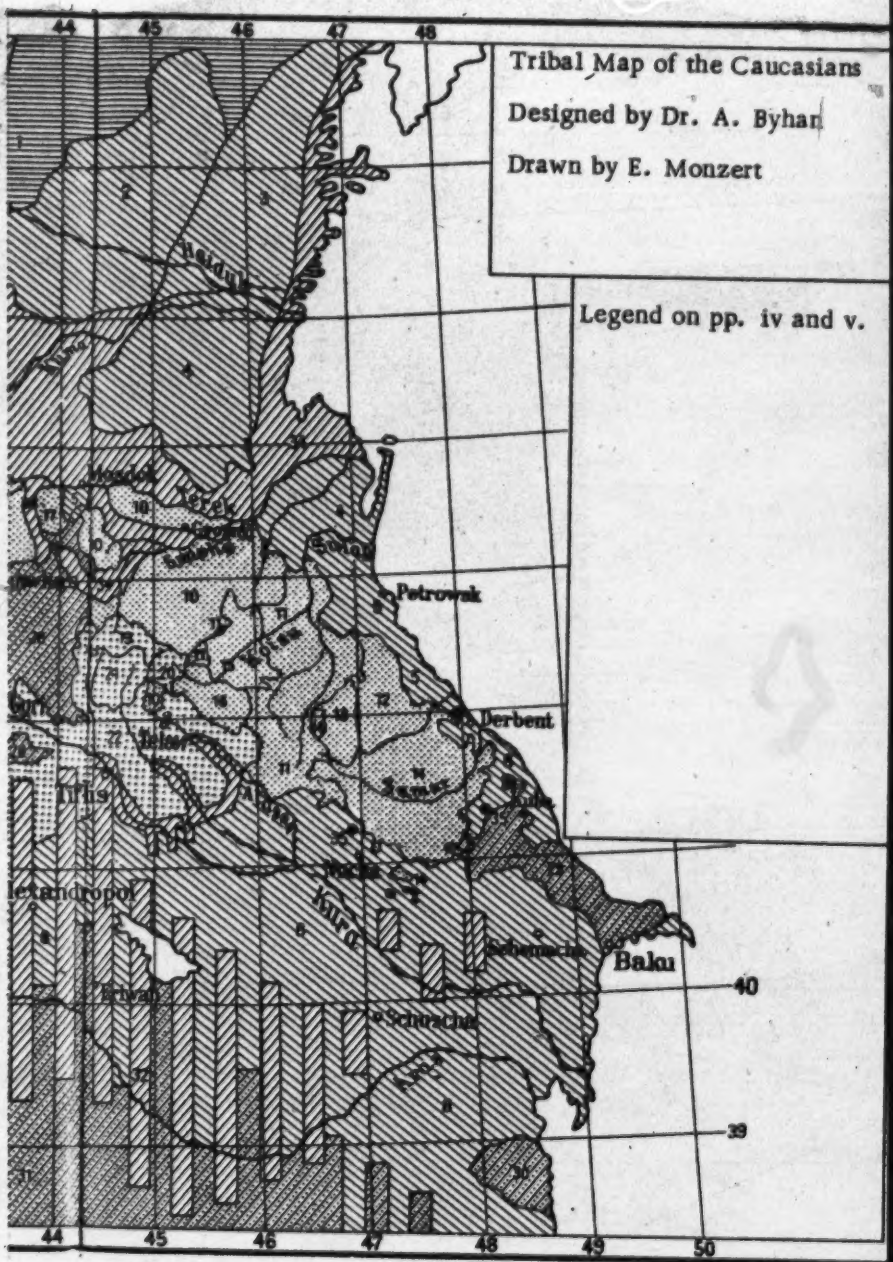
2: Byhan--ii E-4 (no date) 1926 RI13 Abkhaz RI13
Caucasia RH1
A
107
131
C
100
133
131



2: Byhan--iii E-4 (no date) 1926

RI13 Abkhaz RI13
Caucasia R#1

A
107
131
C
102
133
131



[p. 749 (B)]

Caucasia RH1

A
108
131
C
102
133
131

MONGOL:

1 Kalmyk

TURKS:

2 Turkmen /Turcoman/
3 Kirgis /Kirgiz/
4 Nogai
5 Kymyk /Kumyk/
6 Taulu
7 Karatschai /Karachai/
8 Aserbaidshan Tatar /Azerbaijani Tatar/
9 Osman

CAUCASIANS:

10 Tschetschen /Chechen/

LESGHIER: /Lezgin/

11 Awar /Avar/
12 Dargin /[illegible]/
13 Lak /Lek/
14 Kürin /Kurin/
15 Andi
16 Dido /Didol/

---

17 Tscherkess /Cherkess/
18 Abchas /Abkhaz/

KHARTHWELIER /Karthvelians/

19 Chewsur /Khevsur/
20 Thusch /Tush/
21 Pschaw /Pshav/
22 Georgier /Grusians/
23 Jmerier /Imeretin/
24 Swan
25 Mingrel
26 Gurier /Gurian/
27 Las /Laz/

A
102
131

INDO-EUROPEAN:

JRANIER /IRANIANS/:

C
102
133
131

28 Ossen /Osset/
29 Tat
30 Talysch /Talysh/
31 Kurd

32 Armenians
33 Greeks
34 Russians

SEMITES:

35 Mountain Jews

23: Shabad N-4 (no date) 1951 Rl Soviet Union Rl
Abchas RL3

Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
Capital, Sukhumi; area, 3,300, population, 330,000

The Abkhaz Autonomous SSR or Abkhasia (Russian *Abkhaziya*) occupies the extreme northwestern portion of the Georgian SSR, on the southwestern slope of the Greater Caucasus, oriented toward the Black Sea. Nearly the entire population, including, in addition to the basic Abkhaz national group, Georgians, Russians, Armenians, and Greeks, is established in a narrow littoral zone between the town of Gagra and the Ingur (or Enguri) River, which forms the southeastern border of the republic. The mountain slopes are largely forested. The humid subtropical climate of the lowland makes possible the cultivation of such important crops as citrus fruits (tangerines, lemons, oranges, and grapefruit), tea, tung-wood, geranium, and other subtropical plants. The principal staple crops are corn and a high-quality tobacco, which is partly exported abroad and makes the Abkhaz Autonomous SSR one of the major tobacco-growing areas of the USSR. Lumbering is important in the forested area, and there is a large paper mill on the Ingur River. Other important power resources are the excellent coking coal of Tkvarcheli and the many mountain streams which furnish hydroelectric energy. The industry consists chiefly of sawmilling, woodworking, wine making, tobacco processing, and fruit canning and its centers are the capital, Sukhumi, Gudauta, Ochamchire, and Gagra. The Black Sea littoral is a popular climatic resort area, having numerous tourist resorts and sanatoria. The principal transportation routes are the Black Sea shore railroad, which was completed during the Second World War, and the Sukhumi military road, which leads across the Greater Caucasus at Klukhori Pass and has its terminus at Sukhumi, on the Black Sea coast.

Sukhumi, which was formerly called Sukhum, is one of the most important subtropical health resorts of the USSR. It is the center of the tobacco-growing area and has tobacco factories, distilleries, metalworks, and food-processing plants. There are tropical botanical gardens and a research institute devoted to subtropical agriculture. Near by on the Gumista River is a hydroelectric station completed after the Second World War.

Gali is an agricultural processing center in a tea and citrus-fruit district.

Tkvarcheli, which developed in the 1930's, has overtaken the older

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZha

small salt *akwakwàr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Lə̀milaħ* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Lə̀milakħ* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwàr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyəbir* (in Geo. *riktap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abaia*.

[1] *Anasp'a dsw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dsadsola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-satekhela*. The word *a-baia*, in Abkhasian *a-màrtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik iedhi*.

/7 cont./

127 Droeba 1884-1885; 3. "Ocherk Abkhazskoy mifologii /Sketch of Abkhaz Mythology/," by verovaniya abkhaztsev /Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A., in the Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh, No. V; and 5. "Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie tuzemnago naseleniya Sukhumskago otdiela /The Economic Condition of the Native Population of the Sukhum District/," same author, in the same Sbornik, VI.

M. Dzhanashvili. April 25, 1892, Tiflis.

/8/

ooo

I.

Abkhazia and the Abkhaz

The Abkhaz -- His Character -- Robberies, Raids, and Thieving -- Eloquence of the Abkhaz -- Blood Vengeance -- Love of Homeland -- Hospitality, Politeness, and Friendliness -- Honesty -- Values -- Folk Games -- Poetry.

●142 The Abkhaz is a mountaineer of medium stature, slender, swarthy, with black hair and eyes. He is fearless, brave, and
181 proud, but at the same time capricious and extremely quick-tempered. Besides his inborn giftedness, his beauty, and, in general, the likeable aspects of his character, he also exhibits quite a few negative traits, of which we shall speak below.

579 Since the most ancient times the Abkhaz have been known as the most fearless and daring of robbers. They constantly raided their neighbors, pillaging and ruining them. For that matter, the habit of robbing and raiding is common to all the mountaineers in general. "Without robbery and raids, life is not worth living to a mountaineer," says Sergei Mech in his work. All his poetry, all the beauty of his existence is in this trait of the mountaineer. Only the tiger can be compared to the mountaineer in the suddenness and swiftness of his attack on a sleeping village in the deep, dark night. Going for plunder, the mountaineer is sure that

[749] b) The Cherkess and Abkhaz

C 101 A 101 A 648 195 C 101 648 C A 167 A 142

The Cherkess are called Kerketai, Kerketioi, Kerketaioi, Syndyi, Zygoi, Zinchoi by the Latin and Greek authors of antiquity; the Abkhaz are called the Apsil by Pliny (29 to 70 A.D.) and Arrian (100 to 160 A.D), Ap'šili and Ap'sari in Georgian chronicles: Abkhazia was dependent on Georgia during the first few centuries after Christ and afterwards on Lazia; in 786 it became an independent kingdom and was united again with Georgia by Bagrat III (980 to 1014) by marriage. Later it again achieved independence under the house of Shervashidze until the Russians occupied it, first the southern part, Samurzakhan, in 1845, and the rest of Abkhazia in 1863. The Cherkess are supposed to have occupied the northern foreland to a point beyond the Kuma, but later [750] [Fig. 441 appears here] to have been pushed back over the Terek, the Kuban, and the Malka rivers by the Tatars and, since 1777, by the Russians. As a result of the Tatar pressure the Cherkess tribes along the coast of the Black Sea had moved from there in the fourteenth century and pushed in among the Nogai, Karachi, and Taulu, in the Kabarda district, from which they derive their present name. After the suppression of the revolt in Dagestan and, in the autumn of 1864, the decisive defeat of the Cherkess, who had been offering stubborn resistance for decades, most of them, over 400,000, emigrated together with many Abkhaz, including the entire Ubykh tribe, to Asia Minor, Syria, and the Balkan peninsula.

[751] The Abkhaz (see Fig. 441) are physically of medium height, powerful build, and wiry. The skull

142
091
308
516

Fig. 441. Abkhaz (From Count J. Zichy)

[751 cont.]
A 142 is somewhat flattened, the nose short, straight or arched, the color of the face pale brown, and that of the eyes, hair, and beard dark brown to black. Blue eyes and light hair are rare. A [143] The southern Samurzakhan show admixture with Georgians (Mingrel); they are taller, more powerfully built, and have more delicate features.

C 142 The Cherkess (see Fig. 442) are taller than the Abkhaz, slender, and have broad shoulders and narrow hips. The skull is of medium size and pear-shaped, the nose thin and straight. The face is oval; the hair and eyes are brown. The girls and young women are famous for their beauty.

A 2 181 The Cherkess are proud, vengeful, cunning, insolent, good fighters, indefatigable on horseback and on foot, certain marksmen, and were formerly notorious as savage bandits. The

C 291 142 302 411

Fig. 442. Cherkess (From R. v. Erckert)

A 291 ● 142

[752 cont.]

Fig. 443. Abkhaz Woman

C 411 [439] octagonal damascened barrel, in earlier times imported from Bakhchisarai in the Crimea, in a sheath of skin, leather, or felt (see Fig. 451, 1), or a knout (see Fig. 451, 8, 10). Earlier it also included (see Fig. 445) a shirt of mail (affé) with a cotton lining, [Fig. 444 appears here] [753] arm bands (abkhumbukh), hand guard (aŝteld), helmet (taŝ) or skullcap (kip'a), battle-ax, javelin with barbs, bow, quiver, and arrows. Only the nobles were permitted to use white eagle feathers for feathering the arrows.

C 714 411

C [564]

A 291 The parts of the women's costume are (see Fig. 446): a thin shirt of red silk (kanaŭs) with long sleeves, over that an undergarment of striped silk with sleeves that are narrow at the top, wide at the bottom, and pleated, over it a bodice with [Fig. 445 appears here] gold and silver embroidery and lacing of silver balls and plates, and a long coat with a wide richly decorated piece of material set in at each sleeve, pants usually of yellow silk, (formerly among the Abkhaz, white for girls, red for women, blue for widows), leather belt with

K [291]

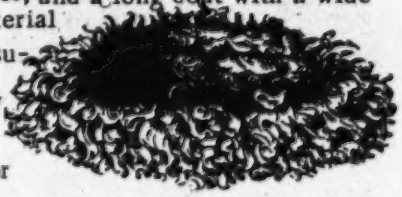


Fig. 444. Kabardin Cap of Lambskin (From Count J. Zichy)

A 142 [751 cont.]
is somewhat flattened, the nose short, straight or arched, the color of the face pale brown, and that of the eyes, hair, and beard dark brown to black. Blue eyes and light hair are rare.
A [143] The southern Samurzakhan show admixture with Georgians (Mingrel); they are taller, more powerfully built, and have more delicate features.

C 142 The Cherkess (see Fig. 442) are taller than the Abkhaz, slender, and have broad shoulders and narrow hips. The skull is of medium size and pear-shaped, the nose thin and straight. The face is oval; the hair and eyes are brown. The girls and young women are famous for their beauty.

A 2 181 The Cherkess are proud, vengeful, cunning, insolent, good fighters, indefatigable on horseback and on foot, certain marksmen, and were formerly notorious as savage bandits. The

C 291 142 302 411

Fig. 442. Cherkess (From R. v. Erckert)

/20 cont./

565 608 In the house of the child's parents, another banquet is held, to which the neighbors are also invited. On this occasion all kinds of honors are shown to the foster mother and her husband. The foster parents are granted the right to be the first to wash their hands, and upon their return home the parents of the child must seat them on their horses, i.e., when they mount, the stirrups on the other side must be held. The foster parents return home with [431] the child, loaded with all kinds of presents, animals, clothes, money.

The foster child remains with the foster parents during the course of eight or nine years, and then it is taken to the real parents. It hardly need be said that the child, having spent its early years in someone else's home, where it grew up and learned to walk, talk, and to love its foster mother and those surroundings, now has difficulty in adjusting itself to the new situation -- at • [154] first the father's house seems almost like a prison to him. For this reason the child is allowed to visit the foster parents frequently. If the foster child is an orphan, however, he remains in the home and under the care of his foster parents until he is married.

/21/ The foster child is obligated to defend the interests of the foster parents, i.e. of that family whose members reared him. He is required, for instance, to search for a lost article belonging to his foster parents, to find the thief and to call him to account, and it is a great disgrace to him if he is unable to do this. In the same way, if someone offends the foster parents and they are not strong enough to pay back the insult, their ward must stand up for them. Let us suppose, for instance, that some prince has beaten a peasant. In this case the ward of the injured peasant must de- [683] mand satisfaction, not from the princely offender himself, for "his blood is unequal to that of a peasant," but from his foster parent, a peasant, and he is the one who has to answer for the insult inflicted upon the foster parent of another prince. If a peasant foster-father gets into any kind of trouble, his princely ward endeavors by hook or by crook to rescue him from his difficulties. In such cases, if the ward himself is still immature and unable to help his foster parents, then his parents act in his place.

/23 cont./

608 565 peasants also rear the children of clergymen, of merchants, and even of other peasants. There are also cases of even nobles taking in and rearing the sons of strong and influential princes on the same basis.

IV.

Marriage

583 Some fifteen years ago the groom usually abducted a girl for a wife; that is to say, without the consent of the girl's parents or her own consent, he carried out an attack upon her with the help of his comrades and led her away by force. Such cases are rare nowadays. On the contrary, abductions are now for the greater part carried out with the consent of the bride herself, though not infrequently against the will of her parents. In the latter case, the one chosen as a bride comes at night to a previously arranged place a few versts from the parental home. The groom comes to the same place with his comrades, on horses. She mounts a horse brought especially for her, and the whole cavalcade gallops back to the home of the groom or to that of some influential person. No pursuers are able to take the bride away from the abductors, for they are prepared, if necessary, to fight to the last drop of blood for her. Soon after the abduction the girl herself announces publicly that the abduction took place according to her personal wishes and that she can be happy only with her abductor. Mutual negotiations are now [584] initiated and everything ends in peace; the son-in-law brings presents to the mother and the father of the bride, and the case is closed.

584 583 [558] It must be noted that the Abkhaz never abducts a girl lower in standing than himself. This would be considered a loss of honor for the abductor. On the contrary, everybody tries to abduct a girl of higher or at least equal birth. To propose to a [154] girl and to receive a refusal either from her or from her parents

/23 cont./

584 is considered a mortal insult; /24/ in this case abduction is con-
[583] sidered the only way of satisfying one's injured self-esteem. But
[54] usually marriage negotiations are conducted in Abkhazia by female matchmakers or by intermediaries. If they bring the matter to a happy conclusion, their labors are rewarded with the
[465] heads and hides of the oxen that are butchered for the wedding. As soon as a mutual understanding has been reached, the bride and groom, after an exchange of presents, set a day for a meeting.

At the designated time, the groom and his friends set out, with presents, for the house of the parents of the bride. A
[583] princely groom sometimes brings as many as 20 or 30 horses, of which many are saddled. Now a feast is held at the groom's
[574] expense. During the banquet the friends of the groom, on the one hand, and those invited by the bride's parents, on the other, try in all possible ways to outdo each other in witticisms, puns, eloquence, in the amount of wine consumed, in singing, etc. The next day the comrades of the groom receive various presents and the groom himself receives a horse, or money and arms. Then the comrades return home, while the son-in-law remains in the house of the bride's parents with his delegate (dade).

But the future son-in-law still feels extremely ill at ease. According to the custom of the country, he may not yet show himself to the parents of the bride or their relatives. He is wrapped in a burka, and his head and face are wrapped in a bashlyk, under which only his eyes are barely visible. On the first night, during the feast, he hides himself somewhere outside and spends the night in a neighboring house. On the next day he is forcibly taken to the bride's house. But even now he does not dare to sit down and remains standing by the door, leaving it to his delegate to speak for him. In general it is not
[606] proper for the young son-in-law to eat with his parents-in-law, or sometimes even to sit down with them at the table. In some places, husband and wife never appear together before the wife's parents. This is considered shameful.

The bride takes up residence in a small house (amhara),

113, 101, 197, 162

Abchas RI3

/For information on the identity, language, and geographical distribution of the Abchas, see 7: Columbia U. RH1 Caucasia, category 116, pp. 385, 429-430./

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

6. *Akhyò Zoshàn*

The Abkhasians ascribe diseases generally to supernatural influences or gods, but some diseases have their own special gods. The god of small-pox, for example, is *Akhyò Zoshàn* (the golden Zoskhan), and also his consort, the goddess *Khania Shkwàkwa* (Khania the white). How important are the gods of the Abkhasians may be judged from the following circumstance which took place during the spring of 1914 in one of the settlements of the village Jgerdi. Throughout the winter and spring of the year Abkhasia was in the grip of a severe epidemic of small-pox. In order to check the spread of the disease vaccinators were sent to the affected areas. The following account of what happened was described to me by P. Janashia, one of the vaccinators. A certain settlement, fearing that the gods might wreak vengeance upon them, refused to admit the vaccinators; they preferred to safeguard themselves against this terrible disease, *atswarp'shdzà* (small-pox), by the adoption of the gods. *Atswà* denotes skin, rind, and *ap'shdzà*, pretty, beautiful; the whole, in translation, denoting " that which decorates (beautifies) the skin ".

By pooling their resources, the settlement raised enough money to buy a couple of snow-white goats and a sufficiency of provisions, and made an expedition into the forest. Here, amidst the quietude and peace of over-hanging leaves, a sumptuous feast was prepared for the divine guests. When everything was ready, and the victim had been placed, according to custom, on *ashwamkyadà'*, the head of the settlement said the prayer and made the offering to the gods. Nearby stood two bedsteads, adorned with silk bedclothes, on which sat two young women, an *aznauri* and a peasant woman; their naked breasts were covered with silk handkerchiefs. The whole assembly knelt down, while the head of the settlement implored the gods to accept their offering by kissing the breasts of the most beautiful women of the settlement, and thus become, in accordance with the ancestral custom, adopted sons of the settlement. Near the " foster-mothers of gods " stood two of the finest horses, one with a side saddle. The sumptuous feast followed the ceremony of adoption, and afterwards the people, holding the horses by the bridle, on which were to be riding the newly adopted gods, *Akhyò Zoshàn* and *Khania Shkwàkwa*, escorted the precious guests to the accompaniment of song, far away from the settlement. Thus they " turned away ", or warded off, the small-pox.

" You may not believe it," an Abkhaz from the settlement told me, " but this ' adoption ' saved us from the small-pox; not one of us fell a victim to it. You, the learned, have caused our ruin by bringing down upon us the anger of the gods of our fathers," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

2: Byhan--1 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz RI3
Cherkess RH5

[749] b) The Cherkess and Abkhaz

C 101 The Cherkess are called Kerketai, Kerketioi, Kerketaioi, A 101 Syndyi, Zygoi, Zinchoi by the Latin and Greek authors of antiquity; the Abkhaz are called the Apsil by Pliny (29 to 70 A.D.) and Arrian (100 to 160 A.D), Ap'sili and Ap'sari in A 648 Georgian chronicles: Abkhazia was dependent on Georgia dur- 195 ing the first few centuries after Christ and afterwards on Lazia; in 786 it became an independent kingdom and was united again with Georgia by Bagrat III (980 to 1014) by marriage. Later it again achieved independence under the house of Shervashidze until the Russians occupied it, first the southern part, Samurzakhan, in 1845, and the rest of Abkhazia in 1863. The Cherkess are C 101 supposed to have occupied the northern foreland to a point be- 648 yond the Kuma, but later [750] [Fig. 441 appears here] to have been pushed back over the Terek, the Kuban, and the Malka rivers by the Tatars and, since 1777, by the Russians. As a result of the Tatar pressure the Cherkess tribes along the coast of the Black Sea had moved from there in the fourteenth century and pushed in among the Nogai, Karachi, and Taulu, in the Kabarda district, from which they derive their present C K name. After the suppression of the revolt in Dagestan and, in ● 167 the autumn of 1864, the decisive defeat of the Cherkess, who had been offering stubborn resistance for decades, most of them, over 400,000, emigrated together with many Abkhaz, including the entire Ubykh tribe, to Asia Minor, Syria, and the Balkan peninsula.

A 142 [751] The Abkhaz (see Fig. 441) are physically of medium height, powerful build, and wiry. The skull

[765 cont.]

A 2 55 Devlet-khan, Tatema, Kistaman, Tepsike, Gosop'o khuraya (= round prince's-daughter), etc.

A 766 Death. In Abkhazia, when someone has been struck by lightning, he is laid in a coffin, and this is hung on a tree (as in old Lazistan, see above, p. 671 [untranslated], in Siberia, and other places), until the body has completely decayed; then the bones are buried.

C 766 In the sixteenth century the Cherkess used to seat the body of a nobleman, after having removed the entrails, on a tall, wooden bedstead in the field for a week. The two nearest relatives stood nearby, and on the bed was a girl who brushed away the flies with a silk cloth stuck on an arrow, while the first of his wives sat at his head without weeping. Afterwards the body, with clothing and weapons, was laid in a split and hollowed tree trunk, along with part of the gifts, silver vessels, bows, arrows, and the like, which relatives, friends, and serfs had brought, and set on the ground at the burial-place; over it was raised a mound whose height showed how much esteem the deceased had enjoyed. As a sacrifice for the dead, the innocence of a twelve to fourteen-year-old girl was offered, which the youths attempted to take by force as she lay on an ox-skin. After the burial a servant led the dead man's bridled horse to the grave on several days and called him to eat three times.

A 2 764 Now deceased persons are laid to rest with the assistance of a Christian or Mohammedan clergyman (mullah). The lamentation for the dead at the coffin and amidst the clothing and weapons of the deceased, the feast for the dead, etc. resemble the customs of the Khevsur (see p. 737 and following [untranslated]); here, however, male mourners, too, kneel at the coffin. While the body is being carried to the grave, a rope is thrown over the roof and pulled back and forth in order to determine whether the house, which has been severely shaken by the departure of the deceased, still stands firm (as in Mingrelia). In earlier times, the Cherkess also threw the right ear of his horse into the grave, after they had first put the reins into the dead man's hands and led the horse around the grave three times (cf. p. 80). The mother, the wife, and the foster

A 765 [765 cont.] The mother, the wife, and the foster mother mourn at the grave for forty days in the morning and in the evening, and for the same length of time, or sometimes for a whole year, food for the deceased is put on the table during meals.

[766] The first memorial service takes place on the fortieth day, the second one during the second year, usually in the autumn. On the evening preceding the latter (ap's-khuvra = assigning to the soul), the clothes, the horse with the saddle, and the weapons of the deceased are laid out, there is mourning in the house and at the grave, and sacrificial animals are slaughtered. A party of village members in mourning clothes and barefoot bring up animals and food; among them a man carries lighted candles on a twig-shaped holder, as do the oxen on their horns. The next day the horse of the dead man is led around in a circle three times in a field, and the relatives follow A [775] it, lamenting in mourning clothes; after this, the soul of the dead, which until then had remained invisibly among them for the time being, has finally departed from the earth. After the memorial A [171] feast the youths and men hold oratory exercises, shooting matches, and races, as among the Khevsur (see p. 738 [untranslated], and below, p.30).

A 764 The burial grounds, which contain the graves for each kin group, usually lie on elevations and are fenced in. Small houses of planks with shingle roofs--in contrast to the usual building style--are erected over the graves, which are themselves lined with boards, and fruit trees are planted nearby.

A 775 Among the Abkhaz, too, there is the belief that the souls of the dead have the same needs as the living, and for this reason they build these grave-shelters, lay slices of melon and cucumber on the graves, and for a year after death put food for them on the table during the meals. At the second A [765] memorial celebration the father of the house places in the yard a millet-dumpling over which wine has been poured and pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animal. If the souls are neglected, they come to the house at night and whistle, A [753] whereupon food and wine is given to them. When the souls, the "outer ones," are angered, they bring about weakness and sickness among animals and men. Then one tries to console

[766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

[767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZvibzha

'mothers' and 'God', are often pronounced in the same manner."[1] 776
"During the study of the different religious beliefs and customs of [192]
the Abkhasians," he continues, "we came across the following phrase among others: *antswà* r-*məzəzə*—'the cause, guilt of God' (properly, 'the guilt or fault of gods,' N. Janashia). The roman r is the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural. . . . The above quoted construction—*antswà r-məzəzə*—could not have been arrived at unless the word *antswà* was used in the plural," justly remarks the author; "were it in the singular, we would have had *antswà i-məzəzə*."

Abkhasians regard the elements and manifestations of nature as rational beings. Each of these rational beings has his own gods, whom the orthodox Abkhasian serves honestly, in the light of his understanding. If the name of one, or more, of these gods has been forgotten by the people, he, the god, is simply called *inkhwə̀**—"his 'part', 'share' of mother," or they use the full form *intswakhwə̀*—"his part of God," while under the influence of Christianity—*inəkhakhwə̀*, in which *akhwə̀* denotes "part, share, dole" and *anə̀kha*—"icon."[2]

In Abkhasian conception, God is One, but He is of infinitely numerous "doles" or parts. Not only each manifestation of nature, but also each tribe, family, or individual, has his own part of God, just as each Christian has his guardian-angel. The Abkhaz says *səntswakhwə̀*—"my (*s-* is the pronominal characteristic of the first [193]
person singular) part of God"; *untswakhwə̀*—"thy (*u-* is the pronominal characteristic of the second person singular) part of God." And it should be noted that one may offend against not only one's own "part of God", but also against "the part of God" of one's neighbour, or relation, etc. . . .

This conception of the Deity as a multiform being appears to account for the fact that the word *antswà* is in the plural. Here I will [191]
note that such a conception evidently did not prevail among the Abkhasians only; its traces remain to this day even among the

[1] P. Dcharaia, *On the Relation of the Abkhasian lang. to the Japhetic* (in Russian) 104
in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics*, St. Pb., 1912, vol. iv, p. 65.

* The combination "*khw*" represents a sound uttered with one breath impulse. The underlined "*kh*" ("*kh*") constitutes actually a trigraph in which the digraph "*kh*" represents a guttural fricative equivalent to German *ach-laut*, and the *linea subscript* a hard diffusive glottal spirant, which is not to be identified with the palatal (front) "*h*", and which is represented elsewhere, independently, as "h"; the combination "*kh*" (= *kh* + h) is thus a deeper guttural, glottal, sound than the German *ach-laut*. The labial semi-vowel "*w*" represents the labialization of the preceding "*kh*". "*Khw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*kh*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet*, pp. 48 and 39; see also his *Abkhasian-Russian Dictionary*, Leningrad, 1926, pp. xxxv–xxxvi. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[2] I. Javakhishvili derives *anəkha* from the Georgian word *khati*, icon. May not *khati* be derived from the Abkhasian verb *akhat'ara*? *A-khə̀*, head, *at'ara*, to give, to set, to level the head. Or is it a mere consonance?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

Georgians. Thus, according to Iv. Gv. Gomelauri, the well-known pedagogue, in K'iziqi (Signakh district, in Kakhet'i) they say: *tchemi dsili ghmert'i; sheni dsili ghmert'i*, "my part of God," "thy part of God." A. Dsuladze, who is well acquainted with the life of the Gurian people, told me that similar expressions were also used in Guria.

Further, as the reader will see for himself, the word *an*, "mother" constitutes part of the names of a series of gods, and several of these names are of the feminine gender, as Dcharaia has also justly noticed. In this connection I should like to direct the attention of the reader to the names of two gods, namely, *jabrdn* and *zhwabrdn*.* Each of these words has in our opinion several connotations; *jabrdn* is compounded of several words: *j* is the root from the word *a-j-ma*, a goat; *a-b*, father; *r* the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural; and *an*, mother. Thus *jabrdn* denotes "father and mother of goats", i.e. "(fore)parents of goats", or "god of goats". In the same manner *zhwabrdn* is compounded of *a-zhw*, a cow, and of the components just explained, so that the whole denotes "father and mother of cows", i.e. "(fore)parents of cows".[1] It seems to me that at the dawning of their religio-philosophical life, the Abkhasians evidently worshipped equally both their male and female ancestors. How strong is this ancestor-worship among the Abkhasians even to-day will be shown in my work *The Ancestor Cult*.

Thus, as is the case of Dcharaia, I think that the word *antswd* is derived from the word *an* in the plural. I also think that the name *antswd*, of the Supreme Being, arose from the deification of ancestors. At first it was evidently used with the plural termination, and in the feminine gender, and later, in the course of time, from "many mothers-gods" arose the One God *antswd*.[2] The changing of the gender of gods is often observed in the religions of the primitive peoples, and *antswd* therefore constitutes no exception.[3]

Antswd is One, but He is plural as to His parts. All the gods, of which we will speak below, are subject to and obey Him as the Supreme Being. In the tales, I was told, it is said that *antswd's* mother came from a Megrelian princely *gvari* of Mkheidze, the Abkhasian form of

* The combination *zhw* is to be uttered with one breath impulse; it represents a labialised variety of "*zh*" (= French "*j*"). Cf. "*tsw*", p. 118, n. *. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Such a morphological interpretation does not appear admissible, as the word *an*, if in this case it denotes "mother", is never combined with *ab*, father, but governs the first part of the compound word, *jab* and *zwhab*, which, judging from the relative infix *r*, is assumed to be plural. [Note by the Editor, *Khr. V.*]

[2] And not *bntswa*, as it should have sounded and does really sound "mothers". See above, pp. 118–19. [Ed., *Khris. Vos.*]

[3] If this supposition turns out to be justified, and the word *antswd* is not of Sumero-Babylono-Assyrian origin (from *An*, *Ana*), its significance as a term employed in the history of religious beliefs generally will be greatly increased.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwədù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *àămen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megrelianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread is baked in rhododendron (*à-k'wazhwe*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

* The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*h'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*hy*", "*wy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotizes the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*h'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*h'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

[1] In Abkhasian *àtshyashwe*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *ant'ari*) *tsh'ebse*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsh'ya*), good (*à-bsa*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *boeloba* (an abstract form of *beseli*, cowhouse) or *iloroba*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ilori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhini-Ant'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaħwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the [462] fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [784] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsàsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ħwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [352] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, [539] and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nɔ̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number 776 seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head 801 of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaħwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[193] [2] *hwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[821] [3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [191] included in both pleiades.

3:Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvlbzha

The Megrelians also know this septenary, *shk'vit'-ul-i*, in honour of which the majority of families let loose a cow with a pierced ear. Her milk is not used for food. The bullock is offered in sacrifice, while the heifer is reared. The well-known Pshav *Kviria* is, perhaps, related to Megrelian Àyt'ar. I have pointed out above that among the Megrelians the god of cattle-breeding is called *Zhini Ant'ar*. *Ant'ar* is the Abkhasian *Àyt'ar*, while *zhini*, in Megrelian, "high," "heavenly," is equivalent to Abkhasian *khikh*. The Abkhasians, however, appear to have split up *Zhini Ant'ar* into two gods, *Àyt'ar* and *Khikh*. They appeal for help to the latter in the spring, when the cattle are taken to the mountain pastures. They pray to him under the shadows of trees. On four pillarets are placed poles, which are covered with leaves of trees, particularly of the wild hazel tree, the oak, or yoke-elm. A cheese curd wrapped in chestnut tree bark is placed on this table (*ashwamkyd'*)* which is covered with greenery; on it is also placed *dtchamak'wa*, a kind of millet porridge, cooked with cheese. In front of it is also placed milk gruel. Women are not allowed to be present. The head of the family, standing with uncovered head in front of this green table, called *ashwamkyd'*, prays that *Khikh*, the great part of the great deity Àyt'ar, may increase his cattle and send all good things. While praying he spills a little of the gruel towards the sea and towards the mountains, uttering *wootsw*. The prayer over, he takes the cheese curd and passes over it cross-wise a hazel "knife", which is really a stick cut into a tapering, knife-like shape, after which he actually cuts the cheese curd with a real knife.[1] This ceremony of prayer is followed by a dinner, the remains of which are not cleared away. Three of the supports or legs of *ashwamkyd'* are cut off (each with one stroke), the fourth remains there untouched. It seems to me probable that the table itself received its name from this act of cutting. Megrelians also know this *ashwamkyd'*, which they call *sumket* (*sumi keti*), "three sticks," derived, perhaps, from *sumkvat'*, in which case it would denote "three cuttings" (*kvat'* < *kvat'ua* = to cut, to fell), i.e. "cut with three strokes."[2]

The Georgian Mountaineers also have their *Anator-i*.

(c) *Alèshkintr* (*alèskintr*).

These cakes are also put aside. The prayer now takes three new

* The combination *shw* represents a labialized variety of "*sh*"; cf. "*shw*", p. 120, note *. In *ashwamkyd'* the "*sh*" is not only labialized, but also lingualized or lotised, which lingualization is not, however, represented in the transcription. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] By using the wooden knife, the Abkhasian probably pays tribute to that very ancient time when his ancestors used that kind of knife.

[2] If the first part *shwe* represents the Megrelian word "three", one should keep in mind not the "K'art'lianized" form *sumi*, but the original, Tubal-Kainian *shumi*; see Marr, *From the Journies to Svanis* (in Russian), in *Khristianskii Vostok*, ii, pp. 17–18. (Editor, *Khrist. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhaz RI3
AdZVihZhq

796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alèshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warɔpà* or *a-*
[260] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[758] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[716] In the opinion of the commission, *Alèshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[23] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
23 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight." [1]

The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If
[801] someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri, vàri, khàzà, jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[792] (*vàri* from *aowyà*,* man) as man; *khàzà* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

796 (*d*) *Amza-nɔkwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

* See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the pro/uction of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the
[104] guttural "ɔ" (the ancient Arabic '*ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of
[171] Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Aralìz* (cf. *Alèshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Arsès*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZha

small salt *akwakwàr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Lòmilaħ* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Lòmilakħ* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwàr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyəbir* (in Geo. *riktap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abaia*.

[1] *Anasp'a dsw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-hveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dsadsola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tshkviris-satekhela*. The word *a-baia*, in Abkhasian *a-màrtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutih iedhi*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

1. *Adzɔ̀rga-khwasha*

Either during the night before *baiobə*, or, according to some members of the Commission, on the Wednesday evening of Passion-week, is observed the rite of binding legs with wool threads. Having supped early, the family retires to bed, each individual thrusting out his or her right leg from under the blanket. The eldest woman in the family stands on a stool in the middle of the room, and spins thread from wool. She does her work in silence. Having spun the required quantity, she quietly approaches the beds, and binds with this thread the right leg of each of their occupants, murmuring: "May God grant thee to see such days for a hundred years!" *Adzɔ̀rga* (more correctly, *adzəga*) denotes a thick thread; *a-khwasha*—Friday, so that this rite was in former days, probably, observed on Fridays. The threads were afterwards burnt on the fire under the small cauldron in which was boiled the meat of the sacrificial animal, on Easter Day.

2. *K'wab-gharghar**

As soon as the binding ceremony was finished, the woman seized a copper cauldron, or a copper basin, and struck it like a gong, shouting at the top of her voice: "We have beaten! We have beaten!" The whole family then ran out into the garden, shouting *shwaḥ'waf'weyt!* "We have beaten you (outstripped)!" The "beaten" neighbours, annoyed to find themselves "beaten", immediately fell upon them, and a mock battle ensued. The battle was fought, of course, entirely as a joke, and with great merriment. In ancient times, a whole village often went to "battle" against another, beating copper cauldrons and basins. The "battle" was followed by dances and fun-making continuing till the dawn. *A-k'wab* denotes cauldron of copper, *gharghar*, knock, rap, clatter of a copper cauldron or basin.

3. *Aqaf'wara*

This Abkhasian term denotes the following superstition: an Abkhaz considers it a great misfortune if he hears the warbling or chirping of a swallow or the call of a cuckoo, before he has had his breakfast (or has at any rate partaken of salt); the bird will have "beaten" him, and this he regards as a great misfortune. In order to avoid this he eats salt, or something salt-flavoured immediately on rising from bed, which means that he has won the "contest".[1]

* The labial semi-vowel "*w*" in "*k'w*", "*t'w*", as also in "*kw*", "*tw*", etc., met with in this article, labializes the preceding consonant sound, the combination "*k'w*", "*tw*", etc., representing labialized varieties of "*k*", "*t*", etc. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Georgians also have such a superstition.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Notes and Considerations concerning Chapter II

796 It is of great interest to determine which pagan cult approximates, under the name of *Àmshap'*, to Easter, the day of the Resurrection of Christ. I. Javakhishvili states in his well-known *History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian) that, according to Dubrovin, the Abkhasians called *Àmshap'* also *Mizitkhu*. In my opinion this is another form of the Abkhasian word *məzəkhwə̀*, i.e. " part of the moon," derived from *àmza*, moon, and *a-khwə̀*, dole, part, share. If this supposition is correct, *məzəkhwə̀* would denote " to give to the moon its share, part ", i.e. " praying to the moon." [1] It should be noted, however, that neither the members of the Commission nor anyone whom I questioned knew anything about this name of *Àmshap'*. It is to be assumed that this name was noted down from the lips of the Mountaineers among whom it had evidently been preserved. In further support of the possible close connection between *Àmshap'* [796] and the moon cult (and the " tree spirit ") there is also the fact that the most important role in these festivals is assigned to St. George of Ilori, to which saint, as Javakhishvili has proved in his aforementioned work, is assimilated the moon cult. The procuring by this saint of a bullock, its " purification " by leading it three times from the mountains to the sea and back, the dedication to him of the cow *adzàtwə̀*, and, finally, the Gurian name of *zhwabrdn*, *Iloroba*, prove that St. George is closely connected with the Abkhasian pleiade. Here is yet another curious fact. In the village of Bandza there is a church dedicated to St. George and called Shourkari. There still exists here the following custom: On the Monday [2] following Low Sunday, after the domestic offering, the populace repair to the church, and on their way, singing *Kyrie eleison*, they uproot a tree without the use of any implement, carry it three times around the wall enclosing the church, and offer it to St. George. The tree is then left within the church enclosure until the next year when it is replaced by a fresh one. This, in my opinion, symbolizes the victory of St. George over the moon (= *t'ut'a* in Megrelian, and over the " tree ").[3] Such a custom also [791] prevails in the village Opshkvit'i, in Lower Imeret'i, where on the 23rd April the populace offers, in the same manner as at Bandza, a tree to St. George.[4]

796 Judging from the description of *The Supplication of the Leybaa*, 791 by the priest N. Pateyna, which has been preserved in its purest state,

[113] [1] Cf. N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, p. 133 (or its translation in this Journal, pp. 175–6.)
[2] " Monday " in Megrelian is *t'ut'asàkhà*, that is, the day of the moon (I. Kipshidze, op. cit., s.v. *dghe*). Noteworthy is Lamberti's description of the fear of the moon by the Megrelians.
[3] According to the information given me by Sh. P'aghava and El. Ot'khmeturi.
[4] *O-pshkvit'-i*, judging from its form, is of Megrelian origin.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

Wednesday was the day of the prayer to the tree spirit, with both the Abkhasians and the K'art'vels (and Megrels),[1] which is partly confirmed by the Megrelian name of this day, i.e. *jumashkha*; the latter consists of *juma* and *shkha* (Geo. *dghe*). What does the first component word denote? May it not be derived from the Abkhasian word *ajəma*, she-goat? The Pshavs have preserved the more salient *jumaghis jvari*, wherein *jumaghi* = *ajəmagh* denoting "goat-seed, goat-male", he-goat. This term may have been obtained from the custom of the Abkhasians of dedicating, or offering, exclusively, a goat to the tree spirit. This supposition finds further confirmation in the legend of Dsatchkhur, which procured exclusively for its festivals the wild goat (male).

One may also note the concordance between the names of some days in the Megrelian language, and the fact that it is just on these days that the cult is observed of those gods to whom these days are dedicated. Thus on the Monday (*t'ut'ashkha*) the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the moon; on the Wednesday (*jumashkha*) they observe the cult of the tree, and on the Tuesday (*t'akhashkha*) the cult of the mother-earth.[2]

III. NÀN-ẖWA

The Abkhasians call the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin (15th August) (*a*) *Nàn-ẖwa*.[3] They observe with great reverence both *Nàn-ẖwa* and the Lent of the Assumption. With *Nàn-ẖwa* are connected the following superstitions of the Abkhasians:—

(*a*) *Àwyəst'ăd-lòkhəra* (Meg. *Dchindchat'oba*)

Abkhasians associate the night before the 1st August with increased activity on the part of evil spirits *dwyəst'ăd*, demons; and

[1] N. Janashia evidently here uses *k'art'vel* as a generic term, including Megrels, but etymologically and linguistically such use of the term is definitely inadmissible. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The last two comparisons are made by the author, because for *jumashkha* he had also another etymology in connection with the Abkhasian *a-j*, oak, with which he identifies the Megrelian *ja*, tree; while in the first part (*t'akha-*) of the word *t'akhashkha*, he saw the Megrelian *dikha*, earth, soil. These doubtful etymologies have been eliminated. On the other hand, cf. *nertchi*, in I. Kipshidze's *Grammar of the Megrelian Languages*, s.v., where this term is interpreted as "the basis of something, or the ground on which a house stands", and since the prayer dedicated to *nertchi*, or "master, lord" *nertchi*, as to a kind of deity, cannot be performed in a house with a wooden floor, I. Kipshidze concluded "that *nertchi* is god of the earth", in which supposition he was to a certain extent supported by definitions of the same word, given by lexicographers (S. S. Orbeliani: "the external side of the bottom"; Tchubinov (I): "bottom, the lower part of a vessel"; Tchub (II): "the lower part of the vessel, of the pitcher"). These materials N. Janashia supplements in his letter, dated 16th April, thus: "In Imeret'i *nertchi* denotes ceiling (see also V. Beridze, *Sitqvishona*, The Dictionary, s.v.), while in Megrelia, on the other hand, the rite is known under the name of *p'udeshi do nertchish khvama*, 'the praying of the foundation and ceiling' if not 'of the floor'." (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[3] In my opinion *Nan(an)* denotes mother, and *ẖwa*, "says" (from *shwara*, see above, p. 124, note 2), that is, "for the mother," "the mother's day."

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

[789] they, therefore, take precautionary measures to avoid becoming
[776] victims of the malignant will of the evil spirits. Nothing is left outside the house, or in the courtyard; nobody sleeps out of doors. To safeguard themselves from evil spirits, the superstitious attach pieces of wax to their hair. Crosses are made from *a-lakwòmha* (Geo. *lekumkha*),[1] to which are appended acanthus leaves, and these are placed at the courtyard gates, house doors, the gates of the kitchen gardens and cornfields, the poultry and cow-houses, etc. Acanthus leaves are hung around the necks of the domestic animals. The Abkhaz is convinced that *dwyəst'aă* dare not approach these crosses, which are also a pro-
[154] tection against evil eyes.

776 During this night the evil spirits go out to look for booty, under the leadership of their mother, *Arapàp* (Meg. *rokapi*). On this expedition they are joined by human beings in whom evil spirits have taken their abode. Some of these evil spirits ride wolves or cats, and devour all the animals left outside by their owners who had no time, or had forgotten to drive them into shelter.[2] All evil spirits without exception stir abroad during this night; they wander growling from village to
776 village and through the forests. For this reason it is easy to find out
796 and catch them, and with this object youths go into the woods, where they make a large fire, using the wood of *a-lakwòmha*. The youngsters hide behind the bushes and watch out to see if they can recognize those of their neighbours into whom an evil spirit has entered. It is believed that the demons never pass a bonfire without stopping and
[578] warming themselves a little by it. Often quarrels arise on this ground, with unpleasant consequences. This custom of seeking after the evil spirits, "demons," is called *Awyəst'aă lòkhəra*, which denotes "the
[171] catching of the demon"; it is also known under the Megrelian name of *dchindchat'oba*. To this day an Abkhaz believes that an evil spirit
776 can enter into, and remain in, a human body, particularly in that of an old woman.

The chief *dwyəst'aă* is the eldest son of the sister of God, and that is why He, being a blood relation, cannot destroy him, although he may frighten him off with thunder. Here it will be appropriate to quote the following popular story:—

"At the time of the partition of the work between God and the
[539] devil, the former, exercising the right of seniority,[3] suggested to the devil that they should divide the world between them. The latter

[1] The Russian *krushina*, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, that is, *alaternus* (R. Eristov mentions the plant *krushka*, but he does not explain it. Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*).

[2] To safeguard an animal from wild beasts when he strays in the forest, they "bind the mouth" of the wild animals as follows: a pair of scissors is tied and a suitable prayer is uttered. "A sure remedy."
[89]

[3] The younger *dwòlas*, and the elder *chouma*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Azvibzha

agreed. During the night God caused the earth to be covered with luxuriant vegetation. Captivated by the beauty of vegetation the devil suggested to God that the best way to divide the world between them would be for one to have the earth and the other the vegetation. God took as his share the earth, and the devil received the vegetation. God then ordered him to remove his vegetation immediately. Only now did the devil realize his mistake, which, however, he rectified thus: he restored the vegetation to God, and in return for it he begged and obtained from Him the right to the souls of those who fall from the trees, having climbed them without first praying to God for their safety. . . ."

(*b*) *Barbanjia* (*dchiakokona*)

Before sunset on the 14th August the Abkhasian youths light, in their respective courtyards, a fire of flax straw (at present, owing to the lack of this straw, they use dry fern, etc.). Each person leaps thrice through the flame of this fire, shouting " I have burnt the evil spirit; I have burnt the evil spirit ". By so leaping through the flame an Abkhaz " purifies " himself of the evil spirit. After they have leapt three times through the flame each throws a piece of salt into the burning fire, and then, altogether, they begin to beat the fire with sticks to extinguish it, at the same time shouting the above quoted words. At the conclusion of the whole operation, the neighbours inform each other of their victory over the evil spirit by firing a gun. This manner of destroying the evil spirits is called " the burning of the demon " or *Barbanjia*. The denotation of the word is incomprehensible to me.[1]

(*c*) *Nân-hwa*

On the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, the " pure " (eldest) woman in the family prepares *a-tcha* (" a round bread stuffed with cheese "), boils a cock, and leads the whole family into the kitchen garden. Here they all kneel in front of the blossoming cucumber vine, and the eldest woman makes offering to Nan, saying: " the great Nan (*Nân-du*)! We who offer thee this sacrifice, established by our ancestors, humbly entreat thee to have mercy upon our house: increase it like the stars in the sky! " etc. The kneeling family repeat with her, *Âmen*. But no one knows who *Nan* (*Anan*) is; they only know that she is a goddess of procreation of the human race. Of the Mother of God there is no knowledge whatever.

[1] The Georgian equivalent is *Dchiakokona*, which is observed on Ash-Wednesday. *Dchiakokona*, according to Tchubinov, denotes " the leaping through the fire on Wednesday of Passion-week ".

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

of the bees as a sign of her good disposition towards a given family placed an egg (the egg of *Anàna-gùnda*) in one of the hives. No matter how much honey they took from that hive, there would always be a plentiful supply of it.[1]

IV. K'IRSA

Christmas is one of the four chief holidays[2] of the year. Abkhasians call it *K'irsa* (Megr. *K'irse*), which denotes Christ. An Abkhaz considers it a great disgrace if he fails on this day to kill a goat or some other animal. On this day "the table is laid" also for the souls of ancestors.

(a) *Agwə-nə̀hwa*

For some families it is obligatory to make an offering early in the morning on this day to *Agwə-nə̀hwa*, for which *akwakwər* are baked. The supplicant entreats that *Agwə-nə̀hwa* grant them the warmth of his eyes and his heart. In translation the word denotes, "praying to heart." This "praying" is also known to the Gurians, under the name of "praying for the womb" (Geo. *Mutslis salotsavi*); Megrelians call it *Khatsitsi*.[3] According to I. Kipshidze, it is the New Year's Day breakfast.[4] In my opinion it is nothing more than a survival of the supplication described below.

(b) *Got'anùa* (*sharp'ə-nə̀hwa*)

Some *gvari*-s have preserved to this day the following custom. On Christmas Eve, the family go to bed very early; they rise, however, at midnight, and begin praying. Enough chickens are killed to provide one for every member of the family (blackbirds also may be used), or in their place a young goat; *akwakwər* baked. All this is offered to *Got'anùa*; the food is consumed immediately after the prayer is ended, and the remains, if any, are not left but burnt without fail. All return to bed. The dawn must find them asleep. In Megrelian *got'ənua* denotes morning-twilight, dawn, to grow light, to dawn, the Abkhasian equivalent of which is *sharp'-nə̀hwa*, the morning prayer; the Megrelian term, however, is more in use.

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family,

[1] *Anàna*, in my opinion, is derived from *an*, mother; *gùnda*, probably from *gundi*, a swarm, a collection of something.

[2] Namely, the New Year, Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas.

[3] *Khatsitsi—khatsitsi* is called also a bride. (Cf. I. Kipshidze, *Gram. of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. *khat'atsi*.) (Ed. *Khrist. Vostok.*)

[4] *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. (where is also a reference to the explanation of the same word in Georgian by V. Beridze, *Sitqvisatvsa*, s.v., Ed. *Kh. V.*).

their enemies, the god ordered the bird *aqaqab* to watch over them; the Megrelians who have the same belief, call this bird *kakabi*.[1] As soon as this bird sights at a distance a hunter or some other enemy, it soars high up into the sky, and by screeching warns the game of the approach of danger. That is why this bird is always found near the beasts.

The god of the mountains demands respect. He punishes severely those bold enough to bathe in clear, transparent mountain streams. The Abkhaz shepherds do not, therefore, bathe in these streams, being afraid of drawing upon themselves the displeasure of the god of the mountains: the nude body is said to defile the waters of the mountain spirit.

3. *Azhwèyp'shad* (gods of beasts and hunting)[2]

Azhwèyp'shad are gods of beasts and of hunting. They dwell in impassable forests, and lead an ordinary family life. To them are subjected all game, and without their will no one can shoot bird or beast. These gods kill for themselves some wild animal, boil and eat its meat; they wrap the bones in its skin and then revive the animal by striking it with a wand. Only after an animal has been resurrected in this way is a hunter granted the right to shoot it, and then only the particular hunter for whom the gods have destined it: no one else, try as much as he will, can kill it. Of this the Abkhasians are aware, and they employ the following characteristic greeting when they encounter a fellow hunter: *zp'sə-aakhèw yùzp'shùr*, "Which is destined to die, that (animal) is waiting for thee!" the answer being, "For both of us is waiting!"

A few words may be said about the way in which Abkhasians divine the success or failure of their hunting on the day of the Assumption. Before starting out the hunter takes a sharp knife and repeatedly strikes the table, cutting nicks in it. Passing his palm over the table, he says: "Whether thou sayest fifteen, whether I say fifteen, whoever says fifteen (it will be) thirty, fifteen." If the nicks thus cut number exactly fifteen it is a good omen; the gods will reward him with game.

The Abkhasians learnt this method in the following manner. A hunter once followed a wild goat, but he could not shoot it. It led him into the thick of a wood, where he saw a huge cauldron, around which sat gods. They invited him to join them. Nearby stood a goat. They killed the latter and invited the hunter to partake of the meal. When the gods began to throw bones into the hide, the hunter concealed one of them, putting in its place a small stick (or a small knife,

[1] The word is consonant with the Georgian *Kakabi*, partridge.
[2] The term is construed as plural.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

of an analogical formation in a *sh*-root- (= creating, to create, whence the verbal noun *ashará*) word *ashatswá*, which represents an epithet of a deity, and is equivalent to Georgian *gamtcheni*, creator.[1] I have not heard this word used apart from its association with the word God. This root is usually used in its past-participle form. A popular Abkhasian expression is *antswá-hashhàz*, Creator God, but the following phrases are also in common use:—*ashatswá irshaz*, by the Creator (lit. creators') created (said of something very pleasing), and *ashatswá irmshaz*, by the Creator (lit., creators') not created (said of something unpleasing). In these examples *ashatswá* is understood to be in the plural, which is unmistakably borne out by the pronominal particle *r* (*i-r-shaz*, *i-r-mshaz*) which indicates the plurality of the subject (the determinative word in our examples).

It may, however, be argued that the phrases just quoted are composite, and that the particle indicated, a fossilized morphe which has lost its meaning. We will therefore quote another phrase, *nas ashatswá irshàma art'*, "Is it possible that the Creator (lit. creators) created these?" (it was said of the animals), in which *ashatswá* is directly represented as the subject in the plural. This word, and the notion conveyed by it, must have simultaneously undergone the same metamorphosis as the basic name itself, i.e., they must have lost first the intrinsic and then the formal meaning; it became a simple plurale tantum, for instance, in the widely used name for a kind of sacrificial animal, *ashatswá-dzatwa*, the Creator's (lit. creators') sacrificial animal, in which we should have had, in accordance with the rules of the Abkhasian compound word-formation, the form *ashatswà-rdzatwa*. . . .

It is clear that in this case the result of the acute conflict between old and new ideas, and in connection with it, between dead and living forms, is far less definite than in the case of *antswá* itself. The changes to which the latter has been subjected have been more rapid; but nevertheless, owing to language inertia, we find facts which reveal the original meaning of the process of word-formation. One such fact, quoted by Uslar, is given above. Of no less interest, in my opinion, is an example I found: the heroine of a story which I noted down, bears the following name, *antswá rt'ap'hà khànkwla*, that is "God (‖ gods)-their-daughter-Khakula" in other words, the god's daughter Khàkûla (Khàkûla being a girl's name). The same pronominal particle *r* (*r-t'ap'hà*) explicitly indicates here that for the remote ancestors of the speaker, God represented the union of numerous forces.[2]

[1] In Megrelian, *odabado*. See Janashia, *The Abkhasian Cult and Mode of Life* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, St. Pb., 1916, vol. v, issue 3, p. 168. Also Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 132.

[2] See also Dcharaia, op. cit., p. 32.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

Finally, it has already been noted[1] that this peculiar religious conception—in accordance with which, not only the supreme beings of the national pantheon, but even the elements (personified, of course), are forces of many parts, each one endowed with its own particular aspect, with its separate parts, must have been common to all the Georgian tribes proper. Thus, for instance, in the Summer of 1921, I heard, in the village Eredvi (in the district of Gori) the following expression :—*mashin gagvidsqra tchveni dsili ghmert'i*, "Then our part of god was angry with us"; and this year, in Tiflis, I overheard in the street :—*bnelashi ver vitsani, ai, ase venatsvale tchem dsil ghmert's*, "I did not recognize (him or it) in the dark, I swear by my part of God."

[1] Janashia, *The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, p. 75. [English translation, p. 119. Ed.] Expressions such as "my part of God", "my part of the Icon", are quite common among the Abkhasians. Of interest, in this connection, is the curse *ámtsakhu tswaat*, "may thy part of fire burn out." According to Mr. Marghania (Maan), the Shepherds in Abzhua, when grazing their sheep in the mountains, pray to the Marshania-s' part of God (*Marshyánaa rontswakhwo*, because the guardian-god of these mountains is supposed to be the god (or part of god) of the Marshania *gvari*.

G 193 /2 cont./ in its dialects this verb appears either in the form a (e.g., katsi-a = it is a man), or in the form li (ara-li = is not), or as ri or re (akhlo-re - it is near). Of these, the form ari is the most frequent in Grusian; re, ri, ro, in Mingrel; in Svan, li, ari; and in Abkhaz, l, r.

A G 197

(3rd person singular indicative, meaning "is"). For example, deg or dgi means "stand, stand firm"; a-deg or a-dgi = stand up; a-dgi-li = solid ground, earth, dry land. In the same way, nuskhe = count, m-nuskhe-li = counting, a-m-nuskhe-li = accountant.

A G 197

So the root consists merely of phs or phsh, which in many languages of the Caucasus, including Abkhaz and Grusian, has various related meanings: river, water, moisture, soul, spring, etc. For example, in Circassian, phdze or phse means "river, water"; in Grusian phsha means "river, brook, spring-water," phshe-na or phshi-nva = breathing, sigh, smell; m-phshueni- breathing, soul, spirit; phsa = to pour, phseli = urine; in Abkhaz, aphs = soul, aphsha = wind, air; adzi /see foreign text/ = water, river, brook; adzi-khi = well; adzi-zhi = lake; amshin = sea, etc.

A 101 174

It is well known that many ancient peoples got their names from the waters on whose banks they lived. We will recall, for instance, from ancient Slavic history, the Pomoryane, Polaby, Buzhane, and others (2).

2. "Settling in Europe, the Slavs gave to the rivers those most ancient names, brought over by them from the East, which originally were used as designations for river, or water in general. In this way the names Sava, Drava, Odra (Oder), Ra, Upa, Oka, Don, Dunai, Dvina, are of Aryan origin, and related forms and roots with the above-mentioned general meaning are found in

/2 cont./

101
194

Sanskrit; dhuni, dhūni (river) has retained its original meaning in the Caucasus, where among the Osset the forms dun and don refer to any river or body of water; among the Slavs, "Don" has become a proper name, and the form dun with the ending av has produced "Dunav," and then "Dunai." The word "Dunai," which serves as the proper name of the well-known river /the Danube/, is also still used as a name for all kinds of rivers, large and small. Examples can be found in Galician and Polish songs: "beyond the rivers -- beyond the dunai." (Afanas'ev, "Poeticheskiya vozzreniya slavyan na prirodu /Poetic views of the Slavs on nature/," II, 220).

/3/ We see the same thing in Georgia, too, where, in the majority of instances, the names of the provinces and of the tribes inhabiting them were formed from concepts meaning "river, spring, lake, water," etc. Thus, for instance, dcha means "spring, well, river"; dcha-ri = river; a-dchari= Adchara (in Turkish Georgia, Adzharia; dchari (river) = Dchar oblast (in Zakataly); dcha-ni means 'wells, rivers" -- dchan-ethi = Dchanetia (the Grusian name for all Turkish Georgia); dcharokhi = the river Dchorokh; dcha-la, "grove, river" -- dchala-didi = Dchaladidi (literally "large river").

Phsha = rivulet, Phsha-ethi = Pshaviia; Phsha = river near Gori, river in Guria, in Adzharia, and in other places; Abasha (the ancient Aphsha) = river in Imeretia; Phasisi (the ancient Phsisi) = the river Phaz, Phas (literally, "river"; phasisi is the genitive case).

From this same root comes a-phshi-li, exactly as a-dgi-li comes from dgi. Literally translated, a-phshi-li must mean "river." This I find the fullest resemblance between the

/3 cont./

101 174 names aphshili, phshaeli (Pshav), and Abasheli = Absheli (dweller on the banks of the river Abashi). The same meaning is also found in the word "Absari," in which, instead of the substantive verb ali, its other form ari appears (Abs-ari = Abs-ali); and since the Grusian ari, ali, and their abbreviated forms, ri, li, change to a and ua in Abkhaz (kharthu-ali = akhirthu-a = Grusian, guruli = a-gura-a = Gurian, me-gre-li = a-gru-a = Mingrel), we also have absua = Abkhaz, i.e., Grusian abshi-li (Abkhaz) = Abkhazian absu-a, with the same meaning.

From this same root are derived the names of many rivulets in Abkhazia, such as Phshitsa (a tributary of the Bzyb), Phshandra (near the village of Lykhny), the river Phstse, the river Khashu-Phse, the Phsbu, Tua-phse, etc.

/4/ The Circassians, of the same tribe as the Abkhaz and called adzikhi, adzigi, adzegi by the natives, got their name from the same root, dzi or dze, meaning "water, river, sea." As mentioned above, phse or phdze means "water, river" in Circassian; it has the same meaning in both Grusian and Abkhaz. Besides, in these latter languages from the same root were formed the words zghua or dzughva (Grusian, Mingrel and Svan) meaning "sea," adzizhi (Abkhaz) = lake, adzikhi (Abkhaz) = well, spring water. In this way, then the adzikhi (Circassians) came to be called by such a name. In exactly the same way, the word shapsugi from Grusian literally means "river-, living near the river" (sha-phsu-gi = sa-phsu-gi = sa-phshu-gi means in translation "where water -- there").

The most interesting of all is another word in Grusian, tba, meaning "lake." This word is found in the old literary monuments and today in the Mingrelian dialect and is pronounced the same way, toba; the Svan pronounce it tibar, sometimes tuibar, meaning "lake," as well as "deep ravine," and in general "deep hollow." In texts dated as early as the tenth century we find the name of the ancient Grusian province of Tbetha, in the center of which are the splendid ruins of the famous church of Tbetha, built by Ashot Kukh (died in 918). Tbetha means "lake region,

/4 cont./

101 lakes"; Tbeli and tobeli (1) mean "little lake, lake-, located
194

1. "Tbeli" (pronounced "tobeli" in Mingrel) has been the title of the bishops of Tbetha since 918 A.D.

or living near a lake." And I can find no difference whatsoever between the Grusian Tobeli and the biblical Thobeli, which on Kipert's map occupy exactly the spot where the Grusian province of Tobetha (Tobeli) is located.

Greco-Roman authors sometimes refer to these Thobeli as Tibareni, and this name is also the Grusian Tobeli, or, in the Svan pronunciation, "Tibar." In the plural of this word we have "Tibareni," i.e., Tibarians = lake-dwellers. Hecataeus (ca. 550 B.C.) calls them Tipanisi (Tipanisse), which is a genitive plural and in Grusian means "those of the lakes." The Greco-Roman authors consider the Tipanisi, Tibareny, to be a people related to the Moskhi and the Kolkhi. From this same root we now have a multitude of /5/ names such as Tobarovani (rich in lakes), Lake Taparavan; Tobanieri (lake-), village in Imeretia (near Kutais); Toba-qure (lake-bay), village in Mingrelia; Didi-tba, great lake, near Tsarskie Kolodtsy; Tubanis-tba, lakish-lake, in the Akhalkalaki uyezd; Tqe-tcba (forest-lake) in the Zakataly okrug, and others.

Reserving the right to return on some other occasion to a more detailed exposition of my views on the origin of the ethnic names of the Kartvelian people, I shall continue now with a brief historical sketch of Abkhazia.

195 The Grusian chronicles, the authenticity and ancientness of which were refuted by the late K.P. Patkanov, but which are fully substantiated anew by the discovered Grusian chronicle of the first half of the tenth century, testify that the propagator of Christianity in Abkhazia was Simon the Canaanite, who was in Georgia together with the apostle Andrew. Both apostles entered Adzharia, from where Andrew set out for Meskhetia (to Akhaltsikh),

/35 cont./

776 religious ceremonies, the Abkhaz addresses God thus: Akhdau
[782] (or antsa-daukva) /36/ zlypkha-khkhaura, which means "Great God, merciful one, gracious one."

Besides this merciful god, the Abkhaz, as we have said, have other secondary gods, whose creation was necessitated by the people's needs. Every atmospheric phenomenon, every danger threatening a man or his property, every type of toil assuring the existence of man created in the childish imaginations of these people separate, invisible protectors, ruling over all. These deities have no images, since they appear in different forms according to the circumstances; nevertheless, according to the understanding of the Abkhaz, not to be doubted, for it is felt in all the good and evil that can happen in the life of a person. Every step of a man is under their control and every departure from the true way immediately evokes punishment by them.

• 774 776 As science has proved by a multitude of analogous examples from other primitive peoples, there can be no doubt that nature and its phenomena have played an enormous role in the development of the religious ideas and theistic images of the Abkhaz people. Their childlike mentality and imagination were undoubtedly strongly influenced by the azure sky, resting like an immense vault upon the earth, now threateningly and severely looking down from behind the clouds, now smiling with its fiery eyes, the sun by day and the moon and the stars by night. Mother Earth herself also exerted her influence upon them, for she is indeed mother, nurse, provider, and source of blessings and abundance; nor did the sun, the "eye of heaven," giving warmth and life to the whole world, remain without influence on their childlike imaginations, nor the moon, the "guard of night," which quietly floats on the vault of the sky and conquers the darkness of night; the threatening thunder bolt, instilling terror and destroying everything in its way; the air, now quiet and friendly and still, now threateningly perturbed and howling; the colorful, beautiful rainbow, this "belt" of the sky; the dawn, that "gate of Day"... All this and much else, of course, greatly

/35 cont./

776 [194] affected man in his infant stage; no wonder the Abkhaz personifies and deifies all these, together with trees, woods, fields, etc.; he deifies some things because they bring him help, others because they do him harm. Accordingly, Abkhaz mythology created special protective deities for every activity /37/ of man, whether agriculture, industry, art, or herding. Some of these are, for instance: Aithar, the protector of cattle; Dzhadzha, god of sowing; Shasha, god of the smithy, and others. Many of these deities are female; for instance, the protector of the element of water, "mother of the water," is a woman; the earth itself is personified as a woman; there is also a "lady-wind"; the ancestor of cattle is female, as is the ancestor of nanny-goats; the god of sowing, Dzhadzha, and others are also female.

777 776 [194] Besides these deities, there are the Ashatsa-chaphatsa, the "creator" and "forger" gods. There are either two of them, or many. Under the influence of Christianity, they are presented in the form of angels. "Every soul" is born through Ashatsa-chaphatsa. They determine the future of the newborn child, his happiness and unhappiness, the length of his life and the hour of his death, and they make an inscription on his forehead (lakhints'ara /see foreign text/) concerning all this. The Abkhaz is certain that these inscriptions on the forehead exist and believes that anyone can confirm it with his own eyes. Incidentally, let us tell an Abkhaz tale that illustrates the inevitability of predestination or fate.

777 776 539 In the night two men set out to steal. On the way they were caught in a heavy rainstorm. They took refuge under the porch of a peasant's hut. Peeping in, they saw a group of women gathered, among them a woman in labor, who shortly afterwards gave birth to a girl. The "creators" and "forgers" did not hesitate to appear. One of them said, "The newborn girl shall become the wife of one of the thieves outside that are looking in. This shall be his fate." The second of the "creators" and "forgers" confirmed the words of the first. The thief, already middle-aged, said on hearing this, "I am not young even now, and she has just

/4 cont./

101 194 lakes"; Tbeli and tobeli (1) mean "little lake, lake-, located

1. "Tbeli" (pronounced "tobeli" in Mingrel) has been the title of the bishops of Tbetha since 918 A.D.

or living near a lake." And I can find no difference whatsoever between the Grusian Tobeli and the biblical Thobeli, which on Kipert's map occupy exactly the spot where the Grusian province of Tobetha (Tobeli) is located.

Greco-Roman authors sometimes refer to these Thobeli as Tibareni, and this name is also the Grusian Tobeli, or, in the Svan pronunciation, "Tibar." In the plural of this word we have "Tibareni," i.e., Tibarians = lake-dwellers. Hecataeus (ca. 550 B.C.) calls them Tipanisi (Tipanisse), which is a genitive plural and in Grusian means "those of the lakes." The Greco-Roman authors consider the Tipanisi, Tibareny, to be a people related to the Moskhi and the Kolkhi. From this same root we now have a multitude of /5/ names such as Tobarovani (rich in lakes), Lake Taparavan; Tobanieri (lake-), village in Imeretia (near Kutais); Toba-qure (lake-bay), village in Mingrelia; Didi-tba, great lake, near Tsarskie Kolodtsy; Tubanis-tba, lakish-lake, in the Akhalkalaki uyezd; Tqe-toba (forest-lake) in the Zakataly okrug, and others.

Reserving the right to return on some other occasion to a more detailed exposition of my views on the origin of the ethnic names of the Kartvelian people, I shall continue now with a brief historical sketch of Abkhazia.

• 195 The Grusian chronicles, the authenticity and ancientness of which were refuted by the late K.P.Patkanov, but which are fully substantiated anew by the discovered Grusian chronicle of the first half of the tenth century, testify that the propagator of Christianity in Abkhazia was Simon the Canaanite, who was in Georgia together with the apostle Andrew. Both apostles entered Adzharia, from where Andrew set out for Meskhetia (to Akhaltsikh),

/5 cont./

• 175 and Simon the Canaanite for Imeretia and Abkhazia. Although the latter fell victim here to heathens, the seeds of Christianity scattered by him did not die without a trace; they sprouted in the course of two to three centuries, and the heathen world shone forth with the light of Christian teaching. On the place where [178] Simon the Canaanite was killed, a temple was erected which attracts a multitude of pilgrims even now.

We also have information from the Greco-Roman authors concerning Christianity in Abkhazia and Georgia. For instance, Procopius, an author of the end of the sixth century, says: "Christianity has nowhere been preserved in such a pure form as in Iveria /Iberia/." Further: "Since the reign of Justinian Augustus, the customs of the Abkhaz have been noticeably mollified because of their adoption of Christianity. Justinian sent to them one of his eunuchs, Everrat, an Abkhaz by birth, with the object of stopping the princes from producing castrates. Justinian also built in the country of the Abkhaz a temple to the Mother of God and appointed priests and saw to it that the latter spread Christianity" (1).

1. Brosset, Histoire de la Géorgie, St. Petersburg, 1856, 4to, II, p. 240.

The temple of the Mother of God mentioned by Procopius is the famous temple of Bichvinta (Pitsunda), which from the earliest times has played a prominent role, not only in the religious life, but also in the political life of the Abkhaz. The Abkhazian eristav /governor of a province/ /6/ Leon II, taking advantage of Georgia's weakness after two Arab military invasions, made himself independent of the king of Georgia, Dzhuansher, and assumed the title of King of Abkhazia in 786. As the capital of his kingdom he selected Bichvinta, where the Catholicoi were already installed. The independence of the Abkhaz kingdom lasted two centuries in all. David the Great, King of Georgia, being childless, adopted Bagrat III (980-1014), born of the marriage of Gurgen, the heir to the Georgian throne, and Gurandukhta, the daughter of George II, King of Abkhazia.

/6 cont./

175 And since the male line of the Abkhaz kings was cut off with the death of the blind king Theodosius II, the Abkhaz kingdom, by right of the closest relation to that house, together with the appanages of the Bagratids of Samtskhe, was united with the Grusian kingdom, and Bagrat III assumed the title of the Grusian and the Abkhaz King. Since that time the Catholicoi of Mtskheta have assumed the title of the Catholicoi "of all Georgia" and sometimes "of all Georgia and Abkhazia." In the florescent period of Grusian history (tenth to twelfth centuries) all Abkhazia and especially its coastal parts were covered with towns, monasteries, churches, and fortified castles. From the end of the 177 fifteenth century on, i.e. upon the fall of Byzantium and the 175 replacement of the cross in the Hagia Sophia by the crescent, Mohammedanism gradually began to spread in Abkhazia; this trend was further favored by the circumstance that in that same century Georgia, weakened and ruined in the century-old struggle with the Mongols and later with the Persians and Turks, broke up in the fifteenth century into three kingdoms (Kakhetia, Kartlia, and Imeretia) and five principalities (Samtskhe, Svanetia, Mingrelia, Abkhazia, and Guria); moreover, the Turks subjugated Adzharia and began to spread Mohammedanism there. At this time also the Caucasian mountaineers (Lezgi /Lezgin/, Chechen, North Osset, Circassians, and others) renounced Christianity and accepted Mohammedanism. Georgia, surrounded on all sides by Mohammedanism, managed with difficulty to preserve her religion, but weak and small Abkhazia was unable to do so; Mohammedan doctrine spread widely there and would have completely swallowed up Christianity if the Georgians had not in good time called the Colossus of the North to the defense of all the ancient aborigines of the Caucasus.

127 In the compilation of the present ethnographical sketch of Abkhazia, the author has used as source-material and texts the following articles by Abkhazians: 1. "Abkhaziya i Abkhaztsy /Abkhazia and the Abkhaz/," an ethnographical sketch by P. Giorgidze, published in Iveriia, 1888; 2. "Abkhaziya," /7/ an ethnographical sketch by K. Madchavariani, in the newspaper

/52 cont./

821
766 "Recently," writes Mr. Giorgidze in the newspaper Iveriia of 1888, "a man was being buried with laments and sobbing. At that moment two bulls grazing nearby were struck by a thunderbolt and immediately the crying and sobbing turned into dancing and singing, "Atlarchouph." The dead bulls were lifted up and placed on a tree, and the deceased was buried in a deathly silence."

The corpse of a person struck by a thunderbolt is placed in a coffin, put on a tower, and left there until nothing but his bones remain; the coffin is then taken down and buried with the normal burial ceremonies and the celebration of the funeral-banquet established by custom.

175
764
[766
[821] It was probably this custom of such placing or suspending of the corpses of those killed by Aphi that led the ancient Greco-Roman writers and the geographer Vakhushti to state that in Abkhazia and Colchis dead men were not buried, but their corpses hung in trees. These are Vakhushti's words: "Though Christians by creed, the Abkhaz do not know their religion and are therefore considered to be idolaters. And indeed, instead of burying their dead, they dress them in their best clothes and weapons, lock them in boxes, and place them in trees." Apollonius Rhodius (250-200 B.C.) wrote of Colchis, "Many grapes and willows grew there, from the tops of which corpses of the dead were suspended by chains. Even now the inhabitants of Colchis consider it a crime to burn corpses of men or even to bury them and cover them with burial mounds; they are put in undressed hides of bulls and suspended from trees far from the city. But the earth as well as the air gets its own, for the corpses of women are buried in it; such is their law" (1). The same thing is

[113]

1. Greko-Rimskiie pisateli o kavkaze /Greco-Roman authors on the Caucasus/, by Gaidukevich, p. 49.

attested in Variae Historiae: "The Colchi put their dead in hides, sew them up and hang them on trees" (2). Nymphodorus

/52 cont./

2. Ibid., p. 162.

175 764 of Syracuse (who lived about the middle of the fourth century B.C.) said /53/ that "it is not accepted among the Colchians either to bury or to burn the corpses of men. They put these corpses in fresh animal-hides and hang them on trees. They commit to the earth the corpses of women, however, ... They venerate heaven and earth above all" (1).

1. Ibid., p. 208.

20.

Shasha

326 796 Under the name of Shasha the Abkhaz understand the inventor of the craft of the smith. They say of him, "Shasha khe ah-dou," which means, "Shasha, the great lord of trades." Shasha or Shash was the first blacksmith. He picked up the red-hot iron, not with tongs, but with his hands, and he forged it, not on an anvil, but on his knees. He is the inventor not only of the craft of the smith, but the inventor-patron of 363 other crafts as well. The smithy with all its appurtenances is the image of Shasha (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888, No. 186.

[782] 796 [914] Prayers are offered up to him on New Year's Eve, and the most complete of the ceremonies to him is held by the blacksmiths and the locksmiths.

782 326 On New Year's Eve the master of the house kills either a calf or a ram, and his wife kills a rooster for each member of the family and prepares a pie of wheat-flour and fresh cheese. The livers and hearts of all the slaughtered animals are roasted separately; for this, instead of a spit, a stick from a young nut-tree is used. When the food is ready

[749] b) The Cherkess and Abkhaz

C 101 The Cherkess are called Kerketai, Kerketioi, Kerketaioi, A 101 Syndyi, Zygoi, Zinchoi by the Latin and Greek authors of antiquity; the Abkhaz are called the Apsil by Pliny (29 to 70 A.D.) and Arrian (100 to 160 A.D), Ap'šili and Ap'sari in A 648 Georgian chronicles: Abkhazia was dependent on Georgia dur- 175 ing the first few centuries after Christ and afterwards on Lazia; in 786 it became an independent kingdom and was united again with Georgia by Bagrat III (980 to 1014) by marriage. Later it again achieved independence under the house of Shervashidze until the Russians occupied it, first the southern part, Samurzakhan, in 1845, and the rest of Abkhazia in 1863. The Cherkess are C 101 supposed to have occupied the northern foreland to a point be- 648 yond the Kuma, but later [750] [Fig. 441 appears here] to have been pushed back over the Terek, the Kuban, and the Malka rivers by the Tatars and, since 1777, by the Russians. As a result of the Tatar pressure the Cherkess tribes along the coast of the Black Sea had moved from there in the fourteenth century and pushed in among the Nogai, Karachi, and Taulu, in the Kabarda district, from which they derive their present R name. After the suppression of the revolt in Dagestan and, in 167 the autumn of 1864, the decisive defeat of the Cherkess, who had been offering stubborn resistance for decades, most of them, over 400,000, emigrated together with many Abkhaz, including the entire Ubykh tribe, to Asia Minor, Syria, and the Balkan peninsula.

A 142 [751] The Abkhaz (see Fig. 441) are physically of medium height, powerful build, and wiry. The skull

[766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

[767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

/6 cont./

175 And since the male line of the Abkhaz kings was cut off with the death of the blind king Theodosius II, the Abkhaz kingdom, by right of the closest relation to that house, together with the appanages of the Bagratids of Samtskhe, was united with the Grusian kingdom, and Bagrat III assumed the title of the Grusian and the Abkhaz King. Since that time the Catholicoi of Mtskheta have assumed the title of the Catholicoi "of all Georgia" and sometimes "of all Georgia and Abkhazia." In the florescent period of Grusian history (tenth to twelfth centuries) all Abkhazia and especially its coastal parts were covered with towns, monasteries, churches, and fortified castles. From the end of the ● 177 175 fifteenth century on, i.e. upon the fall of Byzantium and the replacement of the cross in the Hagia Sophia by the crescent, Mohammedanism gradually began to spread in Abkhazia; this trend was further favored by the circumstance that in that same century Georgia, weakened and ruined in the century-old struggle with the Mongols and later with the Persians and Turks, broke up in the fifteenth century into three kingdoms (Kakhetia, Kartlia, and Imeretia) and five principalities (Samtskhe, Svanetia, Mingrelia, Abkhazia, and Guria); moreover, the Turks subjugated Adzharia and began to spread Mohammedanism there. At this time also the Caucasian mountaineers (Lezgi /Lezgin/, Chechen, North Osset, Circassians, and others) renounced Christianity and accepted Mohammedanism. Georgia, surrounded on all sides by Mohammedanism, managed with difficulty to preserve her religion, but weak and small Abkhazia was unable to do so; Mohammedan doctrine spread widely there and would have completely swallowed up Christianity if the Georgians had not in good time called the Colossus of the North to the defense of all the ancient aborigines of the Caucasus.

127 In the compilation of the present ethnographical sketch of Abkhazia, the author has used as source-material and texts the following articles by Abkhazians: 1. "Abkhaziya i Abkhaztsy /Abkhazia and the Abkhaz/," an ethnographical sketch by P. Giorgidze, published in Iveriia, 1888; 2. "Abkhaziya," /7/ an ethnographical sketch by K. Madchavariani, in the newspaper

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

A 181 [751 cont.] Abkhaz are similarly endowed, but are distinguished from the former by greater irritability, instability, garrulity, politeness, and, like the Mingrel, are notorious thieves. [Fig. 442 appears here.]

A 101 [621] [619] The Abkhaz now consist of 24 or 25 kin groups or communities; as tribes, the following have been mentioned earlier: the Ubykh between Khamise and Shakhe, the Abadzekh between Pshekups and Byelaya, the Dzhigeth between Shakhe and Mzymta; farther south up to the Bzyb, the Bzubb, up to the Kodor, the true Abkhaz, and in their hinterland the Tsebeldin; up to the Galisga, the Abshav and, bordering on Mingrelia, the Samurzakhan.

A 89 177 [302] Dress. The Abkhaz women wear Cherkess, or nowadays usually European, clothing (see Fig. 443), the men the Cherkess coat (see Fig. 441); they usually shave the head bare.

C 291 A [497] The Cherkess attire for men has spread widely among the Cossacks and [752] [Fig. 443 appears here] through all of Caucasia as far as the lowland Georgians in the south, and the women's attire has been adopted by the neighboring Abkhaz, Karachai, and Osset. The men's costume (see Fig. 442) consists of a short (yana) of white linen or red taffeta, baggy pants, a silk embroidered undergarment with a collar, a long robe (tsié) open at the chest, made of black or gray cloth, with cartridge pockets (khazyr) on the breast, narrow belt strap, leather leggings, sandals of leather or linden bark, cap (papakh) of white or black sheepskin (see Fig. 444), and in addition, for bad weather, a black coat (tsauka, burka) of goat and sheep wool, with a hood (g'etapt) that is draped around in such a manner

C 302 that the right arm remains free. They cut their hair off short, leaving only a braided tuft (haidar). Out-of-doors they carry

C 411 a dagger (kama, see Fig. 449) on the belt, and from a sword-belt they hang a saber, the blade of which is often Damascus, Khorassan, Hungarian, or Lezgin work and which is often inlayed

C [439] [495] with silver or gold on a black background, as are also the studs of the horse's harness and other parts of the armament. This further consists of: pistol (see Fig. 450), flintlock rifle with

[753 cont.]
silver and gold studs, shoes of soft leather and gold or silver embroidered, pointed overshoes with thick soles and high heels, on the head a 15-centimeter-high conical cap of silk richly ornamented with gold and silver lace, buttons, plates, and chains, and finally a white interwoven veil which hangs far down from the cap. The braid of hair is entwined with white stripes of

Fig. 445. Cherkess fully armed, with Woman and Girl. Domed tents in background. (From Spencer, 1837.)

cotton that hang down to the feet. Under the shirt the girls always wear a tight bodice of leather that is not taken off until the wedding.

Dwelling. The farmsteads of the Abkhaz do not lie next to one another as in a village, but are widely scattered and hidden in the dense tree-growth of the gardens in the vicinity of a spring or brook. The newer houses are [754] made of planks on piles, in the style of the Mingrel or Imeretin. The older huts are the most primitive in all the Caucasian forest regions and resemble the huts in the summer encampments of Macedonian shepherds. [Fig. 446 appears here.]

A [768 cont.]
776 only their secondary souls (ap'stštšada) wander about.

A Beside their old gods, the Abkhaz worship Christ as the
[177] Holy Teacher, Mary, and St. George as the protector of the villages Lykhny (Anan-Lykhnykh), Lsā or Pitzunda (Ana-Lsānykh),
[782] and Ylori (Tsminda-Giorgi), to whom a sheep is sacrificed every year, and a calf with notched ears is donated to the churches.

C The Cherkess, like the mountain Georgians, had sacred
778 groves and trees, where in former times the public gatherings were held, where raiders found refuge, and where the spoils of the hunt and war and sacrificial offerings were hung. Also individual springs and mountains, certain stone columns (cf. p. 63), and iron and stone crosses were supposed to have been considered sacred.

C The sacerdotal duties are performed by selected older
782 men; they lead the prayers and slaughter the sacrificial animals, sheep, lambs, goats, oxen, in the sacred groves before the cross, after having previously singed them on the neck with a pine-torch and poured millet-beer over them (cf. below in Section III, 1b: Cheremis [untranslated]). The head of the animal is hung up on a tree for the god, the priest receives the skin, and the meat
C is eaten by the believers, who entertain themselves on festival
[796] days with feasts, dancing, drinking, races, tournaments, and the like.

C [769] The gods of the Cherkess are almost the same as
776 those of the Abkhaz; they have a supreme being (T'ka) who reigns over the heavens; a god of the smiths (Tliebske), the protectors of agriculture (Yemikha, Skus'kha, Naokhatkha); the guardian of the forests (Mezitkh, Mezetkha), who rides on a boar with golden bristles and whose daughters milk the does; the lord of the bees (Merissa or Mereīme); three sisters who watch over domestic life, warriors in battle, and the traveler on his way; the god of the winds and waters (Seozeres), and others.

C At the beginning of spring, a three-day celebration is
796 held in honor of the last god, during which a dry pear-tree hung with garlands and other decorations, with a cheese at the top,

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *antswa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*s*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1926, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwodù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *àămen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megrelianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread is baked in rhododendron (*à-k'wazhwe*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

* The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*k'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*ky*", "*wy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotizes the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*k'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*k'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

[1] In Abkhasian *àtshyazhwe*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *ant'ari*) *tsh'ebso*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsh'ya*), good (*à-bsa*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *bosloba* (an abstract form of *bosoli*, cowhouse) or *iloroba*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ilori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhini-Ant'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

6. *Akhyò Zoshàn*

The Abkhasians ascribe diseases generally to supernatural influences or gods, but some diseases have their own special gods. The god of small-pox, for example, is *Akhyò Zoshàn* (the golden Zoskhan), and also his consort, the goddess *Khanla Shkwdkwa* (Khania the white). How important are the gods of the Abkhasians may be judged from the following circumstance which took place during the spring of 1914 in one of the settlements of the village Jgerdi. Throughout the winter and spring of the year Abkhasia was in the grip of a severe epidemic of small-pox. In order to check the spread of the disease vaccinators were sent to the affected areas. The following account of what happened was described to me by P. Janashia, one of the vaccinators. A certain settlement, fearing that the gods might wreak vengeance upon them, refused to admit the vaccinators; they preferred to safeguard themselves against this terrible disease, *atswarp'shdzà* (small-pox), by the adoption of the gods. *Atswà* denotes skin, rind, and *ap'shdzà*, pretty, beautiful; the whole, in translation, denoting "that which decorates (beautifies) the skin".

By pooling their resources, the settlement raised enough money to buy a couple of snow-white goats and a sufficiency of provisions, and made an expedition into the forest. Here, amidst the quietude and peace of over-hanging leaves, a sumptuous feast was prepared for the divine guests. When everything was ready, and the victim had been placed, according to custom, on *ashwamhyaàt'*, the head of the settlement said the prayer and made the offering to the gods. Nearby stood two bedsteads, adorned with silk bedclothes, on which sat two young women, an *azauri* and a peasant woman; their naked breasts were covered with silk handkerchiefs. The whole assembly knelt down, while the head of the settlement implored the gods to accept their offering by kissing the breasts of the most beautiful women of the settlement, and thus become, in accordance with the ancestral custom, adopted sons of the settlement. Near the "foster-mothers of gods" stood two of the finest horses, one with a side saddle. The sumptuous feast followed the ceremony of adoption, and afterwards the people, holding the horses by the bridle, on which were to be riding the newly adopted gods, *Akhyò Zoshàn* and *Khanla Shkwdkwa*, escorted the precious guests to the accompaniment of song, far away from the settlement. Thus they "turned away", or warded off, the small-pox.

"You may not believe it," an Abkhaz from the settlement told me, "but this 'adoption' saved us from the small-pox; not one of us fell a victim to it. You, the learned, have caused our ruin by bringing down upon us the anger of the gods of our fathers," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

/8 cont./

579 nothing will give him away or betray him, neither his dagger, always kept in a sheath, nor the glitter of his rifle, wrapped in a cover, nor the soft, inaudible steps of his feet outfitted in bast shoes, nor his horse, well-trained for night-riding, nor, finally, his tongue, the hissing sounds of which resemble the rustling of leaves... With bloodshot eyes, his dagger in one hand and his pistol in the other, the mountaineer throws himself into the battle with a frightful whoop, and at this moment he forgets everything but victory... Such are the Abkhaz and their neighbors.

Even now the Abkhaz looks upon thieving as an act of boldness, of heroism, /9/ and almost as much of a necessity as food and drink. All the Abkhaz, from the small to the great, suffer equally from this ailment -- men, women, and children, and the Abkhazian upper class have even made it their regular occupation. Times and circumstances change, generation after
● [198] generation slowly but steadily introduces new cultural principles into Abkhaz life -- and robbery alone remains the favorite occupation, as though hallowed by the authority of a hoary antiquity...

867 As a matter of fact, what is surprising about it? While still a child, the Abkhaz is subjected to the irresistible influence of the circumstances surrounding him and of all possible elemental forces. And as he grows up, he acts according to these external elemental influences or internal moral influences. Now, to what forces is the Abkhaz exposed in his youth, and what moral principles does he derive from the phenomena and facts of nature and the milieu around him?... There he is, as a child, holding in his hand a knife with a handle bigger than he is, pasturing buffalo or goats in the forest or in the mountains, and he observes what goes on before his eyes: here a fox, lying in wait for a careless wild chicken, catches its prey and carries it into the depths of the forest to finish it off; there a half-starved wolf snatches a lamb from the herd, under the eyes of the unwary shepherd -- a boy like himself; and there, farther away, a bird of prey, waiting until the right moment, shoots down like an arrow upon one of the weaker forest-dwellers and, sinking its claws into its body, flies up with its prey and disappears into

/15 cont./

462 [281] [513] [912] morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In 437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter; money is not used in these cases.

433 [231] [541] The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture, cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat. A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 [556] Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle. This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it [260] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave out in one place, would move to another place where grass was easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it [178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the [243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple. In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This [824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass (Agrostis vulgaris).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZha

[796] small salt *akwakwàr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their [787] scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Lə̀milaħ* [574] to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Lə̀milakħ* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwàr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The [784] *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and [241] continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. [784] Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After [526] that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyəbir* (in Geo. *riktap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a [137] yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abaia*.

[171] [1] *Anasp'a dsw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dsadsola* arose on this ground.

[192] [2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[178] [3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-satekhela*. The word *a-baia*, in Abkhasian *a-màrtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik iedki*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

796 [969] On this day also they "lay the table", that is, prepare a dinner, for the souls of the deceased, unless the day happens to be one of abstinence, i.e. Wednesday or Friday. In the latter event the feast takes place on the following day.

(e) *Àdsyla-nə̀ĥwa*

On the same day of the Assumption is observed *Àdsyla-nə̀ĥwa* (cf. II (10)). The children are taken to a meadow where they are told to place their right legs against a tree. Each holding an *akwakwdr* in the right hand, they remain meekly in this position until the eldest in the family has addressed the prayer to "the spirit of the tree", entreating "the great part of the deity of the tree" to safeguard them from giddiness, from falling off the tree, and from injuries. The children must eat their *akwakwdr* without removing their legs from the tree.

(f) *Anàna-gùnda* (the goddess of bees)

796 831 This is both a spring and a summer feast.

In the spring, when the bees begin to hive, the eldest ("pure") woman of the family takes some hirse (Geo. *ṗ'etvi*) and an egg, and [794] enters the apiary, where she passes the offerings three times over the hives, and prays to the goddess of the bees, *Anàna-gùnda*: "Submitting these as a pledge that the established offering will be made at the proper time, I humbly entreat thee, *Anàna-gùnda*, to be the guardian of our bees; safeguard them from all illnesses, multiply them, and grant them a good crop!" Hirse and the egg are hung over the apiary.

In the summer, between the 15th July and the end of August, before the gathering of the first honeycombs, more during August, on a Thursday or Saturday, the promised offering to the goddess [783] *Anàna-gùnda* is made. A large corncake (*a-mgal*), stuffed with cheese, is baked, and placed on one of the hives; also an egg. The family kneel in front of the offering, and the "pure" woman again invokes the mercy of *Anàna-gùnda* upon the honey bees, and says an improvised prayer. The family repeat a long drawn out *dämen*.

After the ceremony, she divides the corncakes crosswise, into four parts, with two strokes of the knife; and cuts these into smaller pieces. The family sit down there and then and dine. They do not [621] forget the neighbours, sending a small piece each. The remains are placed in a basket and hung up in the apiary. Everybody passing by is obliged to enter the apiary and bless the honey bees and, scattering about a little hirse, eat a piece of corncake.

[178] In ancient times when the Abkhasians irreproachably observed all the rites, the gods were more merciful to them. Thus, the goddess

/7 cont./

127 Droeba, 1884-1885; 3. "Ocherk Abkhazskoy mifologii /Sketch of Abkhaz Mythology/," by verovaniya abkhaztsev /Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A., in the Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh, No. V; and 5. "Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie tuzemnago naseleniya Sukhumskago otdiela /The Economic Condition of the Native Population of the Sukhum District/," same author, in the same Sbornik, VI.

M. Dzhanashvili. April 25, 1892, Tiflis.

/8/

ooo

I.

Abkhazia and the Abkhaz

The Abkhaz -- His Character -- Robberies, Raids, and Thieving -- Eloquence of the Abkhaz -- Blood Vengeance -- Love of Homeland -- Hospitality, Politeness, and Friendliness -- Honesty -- Values -- Folk Games -- Poetry.

142 The Abkhaz is a mountaineer of medium stature, slender, swarthy, with black hair and eyes. He is fearless, brave, and
● 181 proud, but at the same time capricious and extremely quick-tempered. Besides his inborn giftedness, his beauty, and, in general, the likeable aspects of his character, he also exhibits quite a few negative traits, of which we shall speak below.

579 Since the most ancient times the Abkhaz have been known as the most fearless and daring of robbers. They constantly raided their neighbors, pillaging and ruining them. For that matter, the habit of robbing and raiding is common to all the mountaineers in general. "Without robbery and raids, life is not worth living to a mountaineer," says Sergei Mech in his work. All his poetry, all the beauty of his existence is in this trait of the mountaineer. Only the tiger can be compared to the mountaineer in the suddenness and swiftness of his attack on a sleeping village in the deep, dark night. Going for plunder, the mountaineer is sure that

/13 cont./

574 road in the evening, he immediately greets him, "bziala vahbeit" -- "it is good to see you!" Then he invites the traveler into his house; "Come in and rest, where are you going now? Spend the night in our house, and early in the morning go your way." If the traveler, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, accepts the invitation and puts up at the host's house, he receives a warm reception and is wonderfully well regaled. And if the traveler does not accept the invitation, he replies, "ubeikht" (grow rich, thank you) and continues on his way. The custom of hospitality protects the traveler even from blood-vengeance. Once he is someone's guest, no one has the right to touch him.

•181 888 Along with his hospitality and generosity, the Abkhaz is also courteous, polite, and respectful, especially to older persons. Here are a few examples.

515 516 [264] Before taking any food the Abkhaz usually wash their hands. But the washing is performed in order of seniority, the ablution of the hands beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest of those attending the banquet. The same order is observed in drinking wine. But on such occasions the oldest person does not lag behind either. In the beginning he renounces his right of priority and invites the person next in rank to drink wine or to wash his hands first. This is required by the custom of courtesy and politeness. But, of course, the younger person flatly refuses the honor offered him. Finally, after many mutual compliments and words of persuasion, the first one (the oldest) accepts the invitation after all. Then the same ceremony is gone through between the second and the third, the third and the fourth, and so on, down to the youngest person attending. Furthermore, while the oldest persons are washing their hands, the younger ones are obliged to remain standing. Here again there is ceremony, exhortations for them to sit down, but if those who are urged to do so ignore these exhortations and continue to stand, then the older person considers it improper to

576 wash his hands sitting down, and he also stands up. The question of which of two persons shall first cross the threshold and

/13 cont./

576 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a [608] [155] long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge mtsuge seizgat," i.e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging • 181 the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children [565] of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, [411] dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the [293] constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

526 Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games [541] are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 538 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

A 142 [751 cont.] is somewhat flattened, the nose short, straight or arched, the color of the face pale brown, and that of the eyes, hair, and beard dark brown to black. Blue eyes and light hair are rare.

A [143] The southern Samurzakhan show admixture with Georgians (Mingrel); they are taller, more powerfully built, and have more delicate features.

C 142 The Cherkess (see Fig. 442) are taller than the Abkhaz, slender, and have broad shoulders and narrow hips. The skull is of medium size and pear-shaped, the nose thin and straight. The face is oval; the hair and eyes are brown. The girls and young women are famous for their beauty.

A 2 ● 181 The Cherkess are proud, vengeful, cunning, insolent, good fighters, indefatigable on horseback and on foot, certain marksmen, and were formerly notorious as savage bandits. The

C 291 142 302 411

Fig. 442. Cherkess (From R. v. Erckert)

A [751 cont.]
181 Abkhaz are similarly endowed, but are distinguished from the former by greater irritability, instability, garrulity, politeness, and, like the Mingrel, are notorious thieves. [Fig. 442 appears here.]

A 101 [621] [619] The Abkhaz now consist of 24 or 25 kin groups or communities; as tribes, the following have been mentioned earlier: the Ubykh between Khamise and Shakhe, the Abadzekh between Pshekups and Byelaya, the Dzhigeth between Shakhe and Mzymta; farther south up to the Bzyb, the Bzubb, up to the Kodor, the true Abkhaz, and in their hinterland the Tsebeldin; up to the Galisga, the Abshav and, bordering on Mingrelia, the Samurzakhan.

A 89 177 [302] Dress. The Abkhaz women wear Cherkess, or nowadays usually European, clothing (see Fig. 443), the men the Cherkess coat (see Fig. 441); they usually shave the head bare.

C 291 A 2 [177] The Cherkess attire for men has spread widely among the Cossacks and [752] [Fig. 443 appears here] through all of Caucasia as far as the lowland Georgians in the south, and the women's attire has been adopted by the neighboring Abkhaz, Karachai, and Osset. The men's costume (see Fig. 442) consists of a short (yana) of white linen or red taffeta, baggy pants, a silk embroidered undergarment with a collar, a long robe (tsié) open at the chest, made of black or gray cloth, with cartridge pockets (khazyr) on the breast, narrow belt strap, leather leggings, sandals of leather or linden bark, cap (papakh) of white or black sheepskin (see Fig. 444), and in addition, for bad weather, a black coat (tsauka, burka) of goat and sheep wool, with a hood (g'etapt) that is draped around in such a manner C 302 that the right arm remains free. They cut their hair off short, leaving only a braided tuft (haidar). Out-of-doors they carry C 411 a dagger (kama, see Fig. 449) on the belt, and from a sword-belt they hang a saber, the blade of which is often Damascus, C Khorassan, Hungarian, or Lezgin work and which is often inlayed [439] with silver or gold on a black background, as are also the studs [495] of the horse's harness and other parts of the armament. This further consists of: pistol (see Fig. 450), flintlock rifle with

/58 cont./

731 donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and
789 put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva
[639] dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins
[825] to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

25.

Saints

776 Independent of the general worship of all the deities dis-
778 cussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny,
● [184] Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke
782 their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in
[796] fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.

[231] - On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Ayt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *antswa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1928, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

who transgress against him. In order to avoid incurring the anger of this god, an Abkhaz will not draw water or wash himself when the rainbow is in the sky, and is generally careful about the use of water. Like any other god, *Atswaqwa* may bestow the " warmth of his eyes and his heart ", in return for offerings and prayers. Whoever is affected by his wrath, grows icteritious, emaciated, to save his life he must, at the direction of the sorceresses, make the following offering to the rainbow god :—

On one of the Thursdays [1] the old (" pure ") women take the sick person to the river, pass (Geo. *shemoavleben*) around his head 4–5 yards of variegated chintz, and pray : " The great god ! Acknowledging his transgressions this sick person (the name is mentioned) has appeared before thee, and humbly entreats thee to accept this chintz as a pledge that he will perform the established offering at the proper time, at the direction of the sorceresses ! "

On the following Thursday he is taken again to the same river and place. Usually three women say the prayer, but there may be seven. Men, with the exception of the patient, are not allowed to be present at this ceremony. The sick person is dressed entirely in white. The eldest woman [2] kills a capon and a hen ; women carry out all the duties, preparing *ashwamkydt'*, " *ghomi* " (millet pudding), *akwakwdr*, and *atcha-gvazdl* (Geo. *ghvezeli*, an oblong bread), of each of which there must be seven of the usual, and seven of the very small size. All these are placed on *ashwamkydt'*, on which also burn seven wax candles. The prayer is said by the eldest woman. The patient kneels in front of the offering ; he is taken home immediately the ceremony is over, and he must not look back. The seven small *akwakwdr*, *atcha-gvazdl*, and seven small portions of *ghomi* (*abòst'a*—millet porridge), are thrown into the water ; they represent the share of the female slaves (*aht'ap'hwòs*) of the rainbow god. Everything else is consumed by the women themselves ; the remains being thrown into the river, for nothing must be taken home.

Muhammadans must also burn candles at this offering. The candles are fixed on a kind of hoop made of grape vine. At the end of the ceremony the hoop with the burning candles is thrown into the river.

It should be noted that in some parts of the country this god is called *Atswaqwa-òlia* (the Rainbow-Eliah). So at least he was called, according to the testimony of D. I. Gulia, by Javaz, the famous woman supplicant.

[1] Thursday in Megrelian is *tsashkhva*, the day of the sky. It is noteworthy that the Abkhasians perform usually on the day of the sky, the majority of rites that are seemingly connected with the sky, as in the case given.

[2] The Abkhasian women kill animals only on occasions of certain offerings.

/12 cont./

682 If the blood-price was not paid within a certain period, then
426 at the end of the year, in place of a debt of four spans, five were owed, in place of five, six, and six became seven, so that an already considerable debt increased still more and weighed like a heavy burden on the shoulders of the debtor. But the Abkhaz had one excellent custom -- that of coming to the aid of an insolvent debtor. All the latter had to do was to announce that he "owed for blood," and everybody contributed his mite to pay off the debt.

796 The following ceremony was considered the best way to a
685 complete reconciliation of the parties involved in a blood-feud.
608 A relative of the killer gave a banquet and, through intermediaries, invited the claimant of blood himself or his son. It was sufficient to persuade the claimant of blood to touch his lips to the breast of the wife or mother of the debtor, and, as a result of this action alone, everlasting and indissoluble peace would be restored between them. If, on the other hand, the blood-avenger would not be appeased and would not come to the feast, then those acting for the other side endeavored to abduct the son or some other close relative of the claimant or in some other way get such a person into their house. If they succeeded, then peace was restored whether the avenger liked it or not, for to kill the foster father was considered a violation and desecration of the "breast" and
186 beneath the dignity of a brave man. Love of homeland is developed to the highest degree in the Abkhaz. Some peoples say, ubi bene, ibi patria, but the Abkhaz, on the other hand, prays: "There is no better place in the world than Abkhazia. God, save Abkhazia." In both grief and happiness alike, the Abkhaz repeats this prayer.

574 As is the case with all ancient peoples, hospitality is piously honored and maintained in Abkhazia. The Abkhaz is convinced that every guest is accompanied by seven "baraka" (blessing, /13/ bliss, abundance), one of which remains with the host, and God gives back to the guest this seventh baraka. Even the poorest Abkhaz does his utmost to treat his guest as well as possible; when an Abkhaz sees a traveler going along the village

A 101 197

/1 cont./ From a comparison of these names it is evident that the ethnic name of the Abkhaz was formed from aps, abs, aphs, aphsh. In the languages of the Caucasus, the sounds b, p, ph, m, v, and also s and sh, frequently alternate. Here are some examples: a-m-seba = a-v-seba = ap-h-she-pha /sic/, meaning "to fill"; suli = shuri, "soul"; m-ravali = b-ravali = b-reli = ph-reli, "many"; p-rke = b-rke, etc. Thus the identity of abs, aps, aphs, and absh, aps /sic/, and aphsh is beyond doubt. What, then, does abs or aphsh mean?

A 193 First of all it must be said that in the Abkhaz language nouns are preceded by "a," corresponding to the meaning of the article le or la in the French language. In compounds this "a" is often dropped. Let us, by way of example, take

A G identical words in the Grusian and Abkhaz languages:

● 192

Grusian	Abkhaz	
khalakhi	a-khalakh	town
nathla	a-nathra	baptism
kambechi	a-kambash	buffalo
nana	a-nan	mother
kharthueli	a-khirthua	Grusian
lazi	a-laz	Laz
kaba	a-kaba	dress
/2/		
kaltha	a-kaltha	tails /of a coat/
kherkhi	a-khuarkhi	file
makrateli	a-makratil	scissors
kibe	a-kiba	stairs, ladder
gemo	a-gema	taste
khvabi	a-khvab	kettle
ugheli (Svan /Swan/: ughu)	a-ughu	yoke
guli (Svan:gui)	a-gu	heart
zari	a-zar	lament, sobbing

G 193 Frequently the Grusian language, too, has recourse to the method of forming nouns from verbal roots, with the addition at the end of the noun of the auxiliary verb li or ari (1)

[illegible]).

1. ari = is; in the Grusian language and

G 193

/2 cont./ in its dialects this verb appears either in the form a (e.g., katsi-a = it is a man), or in the form li (ara-li = is not), or as ri or re (akhlo-re - it is near). Of these, the form ari is the most frequent in Grusian; re, ri, ro, in Mingrel; in Svan, li, ari; and in Abkhaz, l, r.

A G 197

(3rd person singular indicative, meaning "is"). For example, deg or dgi means "stand, stand firm"; a-deg or a-dgi = stand up; a-dgi-li = solid ground, earth, dry land. In the same way, nuskhe = count, m-nuskhe-li = counting, a-m-nuskhe-li = accountant.

A G 197

So the root consists merely of phs or phsh, which in many languages of the Caucasus, including Abkhaz and Grusian, has various related meanings: river, water, moisture, soul, spring, etc. For example, in Circassian, phdze or phse means "river, water"; in Grusian phsha means "river, brook, spring-water," phshe-na or phshi-nva = breathing, sigh, smell; m-phshueni- breathing, soul, spirit; phsa = to pour, phseli = urine; in Abkhaz, aphs = soul, aphsha = wind, air; adzi /see foreign text/ = water, river, brook; adzi-khi = well; adzi-zhi = lake; amshin = sea, etc.

A 101 194

It is well known that many ancient peoples got their names from the waters on whose banks they lived. We will recall, for instance, from ancient Slavic history, the Pomoryane, Polaby, Buzhane, and others (2).

2. "Settling in Europe, the Slavs gave to the rivers those most ancient names, brought over by them from the East, which originally were used as designations for river, or water in general. In this way the names Sava, Drava, Odra (Oder), Ra, Upa, Oka, Don, Dunai, Dvina, are of Aryan origin, and related forms and roots with the above-mentioned general meaning are found in

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *àntswa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1928, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibzhq

'mothers' and 'God', are often pronounced in the same manner." [1] 196
"During the study of the different religious beliefs and customs of [195]
the Abkhasians," he continues, "we came across the following phrase among others: *antswa* r-*mərzə*—'the cause, guilt of God' (properly, 'the guilt or fault of gods,' N. Janashia). The roman r is the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural. . . . The above quoted construction—*antswa r-mərzə*—could not have been arrived at unless the word *antswa* was used in the plural," justly remarks the author; "were it in the singular, we would have had *antswa i-mərzə*."

Abkhasians regard the elements and manifestations of nature as rational beings. Each of these rational beings has his own gods, whom the orthodox Abkhasian serves honestly, in the light of his understanding. If the name of one, or more, of these gods has been forgotten by the people, he, the god, is simply called *inkhwə*[*]—"his 'part', 'share' of mother," or they use the full form *intswakhwə*—"his part of God," while under the influence of Christianity—*inəkhakhwə*, in which *akhwə* denotes "part, share, dole" and *anəkha*—"icon." [2]

In Abkhasian conception, God is One, but He is of infinitely numerous "doles" or parts. Not only each manifestation of nature, but also each tribe, family, or individual, has his own part of God, just as each Christian has his guardian-angel. The Abkhaz says *sntswakhwə*—"my (*s-* is the pronominal characteristic of the first [193]
person singular) part of God"; *untswakhwə*—"thy (*u-* is the pronominal characteristic of the second person singular) part of God." And it should be noted that one may offend against not only one's own "part of God", but also against "the part of God" of one's neighbour, or relation, etc. . . .

This conception of the Deity as a multiform being appears to account for the fact that the word *antswa* is in the plural. Here I will [191]
note that such a conception evidently did not prevail among the Abkhasians only; its traces remain to this day even among the

[1] P. Dcharaia, *On the Relation of the Abkhasian lang. to the Japhetic* (in Russian) in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics*, St. Pb., 1912, vol. iv, p. 65. 104

[*] The combination "*ĥẖw*" represents a sound uttered with one breath impulse. The underlined "*ĥẖ*" ("*ĥẖ*") constitutes actually a trigraph in which the digraph "*ĥẖ*" represents a guttural fricative equivalent to German *ach-laut*, and the *linea subscripta* a hard diffusive glottal spirant, which is not to be identified with the palatal (front) "*ĥ*", and which is represented elsewhere, independently, as "*h̲*"; the combination "*ĥẖ*" (= *ĥẖ* + *h̲*) is thus a deeper guttural, glottal, sound than the German *ach-laut*. The labial semi-vowel "*w*" represents the labialization of the preceding "*ĥẖ*". "*K'ĥw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ĥẖ*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet*, pp. 48 and 39; see also his *Abkhasian-Russian Dictionary*, Leningrad, 1926, pp. xxxv–xxxvi. [Translator's Note.]

[2] I. Javakhishvili derives *anəkha* from the Georgian word *khati*, icon. May not *khati* be derived from the Abkhasian verb *akhat'ara? A-khə*, head, *at'ara*, to give, to set, to level the head. Or is it a mere consonance?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
A4ZVibZh9

Georgians. Thus, according to Iv. Gv. Gomelauri, the well-known pedagogue, in K'iziqi (Signakh district, in Kakhet'i) they say: *tchemi dsili ghmert'i*; *sheni dsili ghmert'i*, " my part of God," " thy part of God." A. Dsuladze, who is well acquainted with the life of the Gurian people, told me that similar expressions were also used in Guria.

Further, as the reader will see for himself, the word *an*, " mother " constitutes part of the names of a series of gods, and several of these names are of the feminine gender, as Dcharaia has also justly noticed. In this connection I should like to direct the attention of the reader to the names of two gods, namely, *jabrdn* and *zhwabrdn*.* Each of these words has in our opinion several connotations; *jabrdn* is compounded of several words: *j* is the root from the word *a-j-ma*, a goat; *a-b*, father; *r* the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural; and *an*, mother. Thus *jabrdn* denotes " father and mother of goats ", i.e. " (fore)parents of goats ", or " god of goats ". In the same manner *zhwabrdn* is compounded of *a-zhw*, a cow, and of the components just explained, so that the whole denotes " father and mother of cows ", i.e. " (fore)parents of cows ".[1] It seems to me that at the dawning of their religio-philosophical life, the Abkhasians evidently worshipped equally both their male and female ancestors. How strong is this ancestor-worship among the Abkhasians even to-day will be shown in my work *The Ancestor Cult*.

Thus, as is the case of Dcharaia, I think that the word *antswd* is derived from the word *an* in the plural. I also think that the name *antswd*, of the Supreme Being, arose from the deification of ancestors. At first it was evidently used with the plural termination, and in the feminine gender, and later, in the course of time, from " many mothers-gods " arose the One God *antswd*.[2] The changing of the gender of gods is often observed in the religions of the primitive peoples, and *antswd* therefore constitutes no exception.[3]

Antswd is One, but He is plural as to His parts. All the gods, of which we will speak below, are subject to and obey Him as the Supreme Being. In the tales, I was told, it is said that *antswd's* mother came from a Megrelian princely *gvari* of Mkheidze, the Abkhasian form of

* The combination *zhw* is to be uttered with one breath impulse; it represents a labialised variety of "*zh*" (= French "*j*"). Cf. "*tsw*", p. 118, n. *. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Such a morphological interpretation does not appear admissible, as the word *an*, if in this case it denotes " mother ", is never combined with *ab*, father, but governs the first part of the compound word, *jab* and *zwhab*, which, judging from the relative infix *r*, is assumed to be plural. [Note by the Editor, *Khr. V.*]

[2] And not *dsdsws*, as it should have sounded and does really sound " mothers ". See above, pp. 118–19. [Ed., *Khris. Voc.*]

[3] If this supposition turns out to be justified, and the word *antswd* is not of Sumero-Babylono-Assyrian origin (from *An*, *Ans*), its significance as a term employed in the history of religious beliefs generally will be greatly increased.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Ad2.Vi.b2h9

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswá* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. Àyt'ar-nɔ̀hwa*

1. *Jabrán*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nɔ̀hwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nɔ̀hwa*, which is derived from *a-nɔ̀hwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nɔ̀hwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabrán*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashɔ̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswɔ̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəsa*, a combination of *adswɔ̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *ərsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'hwɔs-tsk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "h" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "hw" represents a labialized variety of "h". [Translator's Note.]

† The combination "*dsw*" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "*ds*". For this latter sound see p. 329 (*b'*). [Translator's Note.]

[1] N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskii Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.
(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashɔ̀* (and *ghomí*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVihZhQ

[796] *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alèshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[260] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[769] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[716] In the opinion of the commission, *Alèshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[23] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight." [1]

[804] The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri, vàri, khəzè, jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*wàri* from *aowyè*,* man) as man; *khəzè* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

796 (d) *Àmza-nəhwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

[104] * See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the pro/nuction of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ع" (the ancient Arabic '*ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of
[171] Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Arsès* (cf. *Alèshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aro* or *Arsès*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

539 [789] benefactor, the moon, the Abkhasians fire at the monster and thereby drive him away."[1]

(3) The Moon and the Sun. A beautiful Abkhasian widow woman had a son and a daughter, who often absented themselves from home for the whole day; they would go off early in the morning and return only late in the evening. No amount of coaxing or tenderness on the part of the mother sufficed to keep the children at home or stop them from indulging in their daily adventure, so she decided to shadow them. She found they were seated under the shadow of an ancient oak, in a thick forest, enjoying themselves in an agreeable pastime with the moon and the sun. Before them were all sorts of eatables. The mother, flying into a passion, flung fresh dung at the moon and the sun. The sun-sister, being a more fastidious creature, washed herself, but the less particular moon-brother did not do so, and hence arose the dark patches on the moon; the brother, the moon, and the sister, the sun,[2] then soared up to the sky for ever, while the widow and her children returned home."

821 Here I will also note that the Abkhasians always welcome the new moon by looking at its reflection through a mirror, or over a silver piece.

[753] A certain mainly infantile disease, similar to convulsions, is called by the Abkhasians *àmzakra*, i.e. "to be caught by the moon".

(*e*) *Àmra-nàħwa*, Prayer to the Sun.

796 [776] When he has finished the invocation addressed to Àmza (the moon), the supplicant takes the sun-shaped cake, and, with the women surrounding him, he says: "Thou, Àmra, *Àyt'ar intswakhwədù*, the great part of the great *Àyt'ar*, grant warmth, and caress the women of our family! Increase our cattle," etc., and then spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà*) in the usual manner, uttering *wootsw*.

According to D. I. Gulià, in the village of Dchilou they use the form *Amera* instead of *Àmra*.

(*f*) *Anàp'a-nàga*.

[776] After that the supplicant takes *alaħwàra* (a large mortar) and, addressing himself to the god *Anàp'a-nàga*, says: "Thou, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, send us the warmth of thine eyes and of

[1] Exactly what *Atòwyə* denotes is difficult to explain. In connection with the above quoted tale, the etymology of this word may, however, perhaps elucidate its significance. *Atò* denotes the barn- or screech-owl; *wy* may be the root from the word *a-owyò* (man); consequently *atòwyə* may denote "man-owl". And by *atòwyə* is, perhaps, understood the sister devouring the brother-moon.

[2] Their gender is often confused: sometimes the moon and the sun are sisters or brothers, sometimes the moon is brother and the sun sister.

[3] I think the Georgian word *mizezi*, cause, is derived from the Abkhasian *amezə*, cause (from *àmza*, moon). (It is doubtful! Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZha

thy heart! Grant us such a crop of maize that at its gathering we shall have to bend the stalks with a hook (Geo. *Kavi*), and cut them down with a bill!" *K'uarpa* (*a-k'warpá*) is then spilled, and the cattle is called by shouting *wootsw*. *Anáp'a-nàga* is the harvest god. In my opinion the etymology of these words is as follows: *Ap'ará* denotes "to twist or twine" something (a rope, for example), as well as "to pass with difficulty through something", for instance, a maize or millet field, crowd, etc.; *nàgara*—to carry: *inap'òo indgo*—carriest thou by forcing thy way, by pushing asunder.

There is also an evil spirit of the harvest called *Jaja*, but we will speak of her (she is a goddess) separately, as she is not a member of this septenary.

(*g*) *Atchshò-shyashyàna* (god of horses).

Finally, the supplicant takes the cake whose shape represents a horse (or three *á-khwazhwə*), and entreats (the god) *Atchshò shyashyàna* —the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, to increase his horses (donkeys and asses). Again *wootsw* and *ak'warpá*. The word *atchshò* denotes horse; *shwyashyàna* or *shashana* is incomprehensible.

With this ceremonial *Àyt'ar-nòhwa* ends.

Judging from what has already been said above, it is clear that *Àyt'ar* is the head of a whole pleiade of gods, each of whom constitute a special part of him; it is noteworthy that in every supplication addressed to any one of these gods, *Àyt'ar* is also invariably referred to as one whose part is the deity in question. The religio-philosophical mind of the Abkhasians has arranged the hierarchy of these gods in the following order:—

ÀYT'AR: JABRÀN, ZHWABRÀN, ALÀSHKINTR, ÀMZA, ÀMRA, ANÀP'A-NÀGA; AND ÀTCHSHÒ-SHYASHYÀNA.

Àyt'ar is one in seven parts. This conception of God in parts is prominently expressed in *Àyt'ar*.

(*h*) *Lòmilah* (*Nòmirah* or *Shòmirah*).

Àyt'ar-nòhwa ends with *Lòmilah*. What this word denotes is difficult to explain. It appears to denote the god of conjugal happiness of the youth.

On the same evening, after the conclusion of *Àyt'ar-nòhwa*, the young people, boys and girls, meet at one of their houses, and begin to predict their fortunes. It is a time of laughter and gaiety, and the young people enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. *A-hwakwàr* of usual size is prepared in great quantities; and also enough of a smaller size, extremely salt in flavour, to enable each participant to have three. In one of these small *ahwakwàr* is placed a hazel chip, called *dnasp'adsw*, "stake of happiness." Each person is given three

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZha

small salt *akwakwdr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Làmilakà* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Làmilakà* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwdr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyshir* (in Geo. *rikiap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abala*.

[1] *Anasp'a dzw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dzadzola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'a*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *saghebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-ostskhala*. The word *a-baia*, in Abkhasian *a-mdrtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik tedki*.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

of an analogical formation in a *sh*-root- (= creating, to create, whence the verbal noun *ashard*) word *ashatswà*, which represents an epithet of a deity, and is equivalent to Georgian *gamtcheni*, creator.[1] I have not heard this word used apart from its association with the word God. This root is usually used in its past-participle form. A popular Abkhasian expression is *antswà-hazshàz*, Creator God, but the following phrases are also in common use:—*ashatswà irshaz*, by the Creator (lit. creators') created (said of something very pleasing), and *ashatswà irmshaz*, by the Creator (lit., creators') not created (said of something unpleasing). In these examples *ashatswà* is understood to be in the plural, which is unmistakably borne out by the pronominal particle r (*i-r-shaz*, *i-r-mshaz*) which indicates the plurality of the subject (the determinative word in our examples).

It may, however, be argued that the phrases just quoted are composite, and that the particle indicated, a fossilized morphe which has lost its meaning. We will therefore quote another phrase, *nas ashatswà irshàma art'*, "Is it possible that the Creator (lit. creators) created these?" (it was said of the animals), in which *ashatswà* is directly represented as the subject in the plural. This word, and the notion conveyed by it, must have simultaneously undergone the same metamorphosis as the basic name itself, i.e., they must have lost first the intrinsic and then the formal meaning; it became a simple plurale tantum, for instance, in the widely used name for a kind of sacrificial animal, *ashatswà-dzatwə*, the Creator's (lit. creators') sacrificial animal, in which we should have had, in accordance with the rules of the Abkhasian compound word-formation, the form *ashatswà-rdzatwə*. . . .

It is clear that in this case the result of the acute conflict between old and new ideas, and in connection with it, between dead and living forms, is far less definite than in the case of *antswà* itself. The changes to which the latter has been subjected have been more rapid; but nevertheless, owing to language inertia, we find facts which reveal the original meaning of the process of word-formation. One such fact, quoted by Uslar, is given above. Of no less interest, in my opinion, is an example I found: the heroine of a story which I noted down, bears the following name, *antswà rt'əp'hà khànkwla*, that is "God (‖ gods)-their-daughter-Khakula" in other words, the god's daughter Khàkûla (Khàkûla being a girl's name). The same pronominal particle r (*r-t'əp'hà*) explicitly indicates here that for the remote ancestors of the speaker, God represented the union of numerous forces.[2]

[1] In Megrelian, *odabads*. See Janashia, *The Abkhasian Cult and Mode of Life* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, St. Pb., 1916, vol. v, issue 3, p. 168. Also Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 132.

[2] See also Dcharaia, op. cit., p. 32.

A 101 197

/1 cont./ From a comparison of these names it is evident that the ethnic name of the Abkhaz was formed from aps, abs, aphs, aphsh. In the languages of the Caucasus, the sounds b, p, ph, m, v, and also s and sh, frequently alternate. Here are some examples: a-m-seba = a-v-seba = ap-h-she-pha /sic/, meaning "to fill"; suli = shuri, "soul"; m-ravali = b-ravali = b-reli = ph-reli, "many"; p-rke = b-rke, etc. Thus the identity of abs, aps, aphs, and absh, aps /sic/, and aphsh is beyond doubt. What, then, does abs or aphsh mean?

A 193

First of all it must be said that in the Abkhaz language nouns are preceded by "a," corresponding to the meaning of the article le or la in the French language. In compounds this "a" is often dropped. Let us, by way of example, take identical words in the Grusian and Abkhaz languages:

A G 192

Grusian	Abkhaz	
khalakhi	a-khalakh	town
nathla	a-nathra	baptism
kambechi	a-kambash	buffalo
nana	a-nan	mother
kharthueli	a-khirthua	Grusian
lazi	a-laz	Laz
kaba	a-kaba	dress
/2/		
kaltha	a-kaltha	tails /of a coat/
kherkhi	a-khuarkhi	file
makrateli	a-makratil	scissors
kibe	a-kiba	stairs, ladder
gemo	a-gema	taste
khvabi	a-khvab	kettle
ugheli (Svan /Swan/: ughu)	a-ughu	yoke
guli (Svan:gui)	a-gu	heart
zari	a-zar	lament, sobbing

G 193

Frequently the Grusian language, too, has recourse to the method of forming nouns from verbal roots, with the addition at the end of the noun of the auxiliary verb li or ari (1)

1. ari = is; in the Grusian language and

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibzha

'mothers' and 'God', are often pronounced in the same manner."[1] 776
"During the study of the different religious beliefs and customs of [192]
the Abkhasians," he continues, "we came across the following phrase among others: *antswà* r-*məzəzə*—'the cause, guilt of God' (properly, 'the guilt or fault of gods,' N. Janashia). The roman r is the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural. . . . The above quoted construction—*antswà r-məzəzə*—could not have been arrived at unless the word *antswà* was used in the plural," justly remarks the author; "were it in the singular, we would have had *antswà i-məzəzə*."

Abkhasians regard the elements and manifestations of nature as rational beings. Each of these rational beings has his own gods, whom the orthodox Abkhasian serves honestly, in the light of his understanding. If the name of one, or more, of these gods has been forgotten by the people, he, the god, is simply called *inkhwə̀**—"his 'part', 'share' of mother," or they use the full form *intswakhwə̀*—"his part of God," while under the influence of Christianity—*inəkhakhwə̀*, in which *akhwə̀* denotes "part, share, dole" and *anə̀kha*—"icon."[2]

In Abkhasian conception, God is One, but He is of infinitely numerous "doles" or parts. Not only each manifestation of nature, but also each tribe, family, or individual, has his own part of God, just as each Christian has his guardian-angel. The Abkhaz says *səntswakhwə̀*—"my (*s*- is the pronominal characteristic of the first [193]
person singular) part of God"; *untswakhwə̀*—"thy (*u*- is the pronominal characteristic of the second person singular) part of God." And it should be noted that one may offend against not only one's own "part of God", but also against "the part of God" of one's neighbour, or relation, etc. . . .

This conception of the Deity as a multiform being appears to account for the fact that the word *antswà* is in the plural. Here I will [191]
note that such a conception evidently did not prevail among the Abkhasians only; its traces remain to this day even among the

[1] P. Dcharaia, *On the Relation of the Abkhasian lang. to the Japhetic* (in Russian) 104
in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics*, St. Pb., 1912, vol. iv, p. 65.

* The combination "*khw*" represents a sound uttered with one breath impulse. The underlined "*kh*" ("*kh*") constitutes actually a trigraph in which the digraph "*kh*" represents a guttural fricative equivalent to German *ach-laut*, and the *linea subscript* a hard diffusive glottal spirant, which is not to be identified with the palatal (front) "*h*", and which is represented elsewhere, independently, as "h̄"; the combination "*kh*" (= *kh* + h̄) is thus a deeper guttural, glottal, sound than the German *ach-laut*. The labial semi-vowel "*w*" represents the labialization of the preceding "*kh*". "*Khw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*kh*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet*, pp. 48 and 39; see also his *Abkhasian-Russian Dictionary*, Leningrad, 1926, pp. xxxv–xxxvi. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[2] I. Javakhishvili derives *anə̀kha* from the Georgian word *khati*, icon. May not *khati* be derived from the Abkhasian verb *akhat'ara*? *A-khə̀*, head, *at'ara*, to give, to set, to level the head. Or is it a mere consonance?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaħwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the [462] fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [784] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsàsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ħwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [352] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àämen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, [539] and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nɔ̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number 776 801 seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaħwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *ħwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[193] [3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with [821] the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [191] included in both pleiades.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

of an analogical formation in a *sh*-root- (= creating, to create, whence the verbal noun *ashard*) word *ashatsw̄a*, which represents an epithet of a deity, and is equivalent to Georgian *gamtcheni*, creator.[1] I have not heard this word used apart from its association with the word God. This root is usually used in its past-participle form. A popular Abkhasian expression is *antsw̄a-hazshaz*, Creator God, but the following phrases are also in common use:—*ashatsw̄a irshaz*, by the Creator (lit. creators') created (said of something very pleasing), and *ashatsw̄a irmshaz*, by the Creator (lit., creators') not created (said of something unpleasing). In these examples *ashatsw̄a* is understood to be in the plural, which is unmistakably borne out by the pronominal particle *r* (*i-r-shaz*, *i-r-mshaz*) which indicates the plurality of the subject (the determinative word in our examples).

It may, however, be argued that the phrases just quoted are composite, and that the particle indicated, a fossilized morphe which has lost its meaning. We will therefore quote another phrase, *nas ashatsw̄a irshàma art'*, "Is it possible that the Creator (lit. creators) created these?" (it was said of the animals), in which *ashatsw̄a* is directly represented as the subject in the plural. This word, and the notion conveyed by it, must have simultaneously undergone the same metamorphosis as the basic name itself, i.e., they must have lost first the intrinsic and then the formal meaning; it became a simple plurale tantum, for instance, in the widely used name for a kind of sacrificial animal, *ashatsw̄a-dzatw̄a*, the Creator's (lit. creators') sacrificial animal, in which we should have had, in accordance with the rules of the Abkhasian compound word-formation, the form *ashatsw̄a-rdzatw̄a*. . . .

It is clear that in this case the result of the acute conflict between old and new ideas, and in connection with it, between dead and living forms, is far less definite than in the case of *antsw̄a* itself. The changes to which the latter has been subjected have been more rapid; but nevertheless, owing to language inertia, we find facts which reveal the original meaning of the process of word-formation. One such fact, quoted by Uslar, is given above. Of no less interest, in my opinion, is an example I found: the heroine of a story which I noted down, bears the following name, *antsw̄a rt'əp'hà khànk̄wla*, that is "God (‖ gods)-their-daughter-Khakula" in other words, the god's daughter Khàkûla (Khàkûla being a girl's name). The same pronominal particle *r* (*r-t'əp'hà*) explicitly indicates here that for the remote ancestors of the speaker, God represented the union of numerous forces.[2]

[1] In Megrelian, *odabade*. See Janashia, *The Abkhasian Cult and Mode of Life* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, St. Pb., 1916, vol. v, issue 3, p. 168. Also Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 132.

[2] See also Dcharaia, op. cit., p. 32.

/27 cont./

764 [203] to come to the mourning ceremony without being invited. The deceased is put in a coffin. The women in mourning apparel, barefooted, their dresses torn, bloody scratches on their faces, and their hair loose, arrange themselves behind the coffin. From the other side the male and female mourners approach the coffin. The arrangement of the lamentations is as follows. Let us suppose that four or five women are coming to bewail the deceased. As soon as they enter the yard, they immediately start weeping and shouting "avav," and at the same time they put their fingers to their temples and continue to scratch their faces with them down to the chin until they have finished their "avav." The women sitting by the coffin answer their "avav" with the same exclamation. The mourners slowly approach the house. Their wails and sobs gradually become louder; finally they enter the house, where the real communal mourning takes place. The mourners enter the house, beating their foreheads and breasts; they kneel down before the coffin and thus bewail the deceased.

In another part of the house the belongings of the deceased are put on display, his clothes and his weapons. After the mourning of the deceased, weeping and sobbing are done over his belongings also.

Sympathy for the relatives of the deceased is expressed by visitors in the following manner: "Had this but not happened to [195] you; had you but heard of my death instead, etc."

764 608 /28/ The foster mother of the deceased or her children, when they come to bewail the ward, break out in wails and cries even a verst from the house. In the yard they are met by people who have been stationed there for this purpose and who lead them by the hand into the house. This does not prevent the new arrivals from scratching their cheeks and necks on the way until they bleed, nor from beating their heads against the house-posts until they fall down before the coffin half-dead and with tears flowing. The foster father and his children likewise beat their heads and faces.

764 [965] On the day of the funeral, lamentation for the deceased is general. Then, after the mourning, a funeral repast is arranged and all the guests are treated to bread, wine, and lenten fare, and by evening the deceased is buried.

113, 101, 197, 162

Abchas RI3

/For information on the identity, language, and geographical distribution of the Abchas, see 7: Columbia U. RH1 Caucasia, category 116, pp. 385, 429-430./

A 101 197

/1 cont./ From a comparison of these names it is evident that the ethnic name of the Abkhaz was formed from aps, abs, aphs, aphsh. In the languages of the Caucasus, the sounds b, p, ph, m, v, and also s and sh, frequently alternate. Here are some examples: a-m-seba = a-v-seba = ap-h-she-pha /sic/, meaning "to fill"; suli = shuri, "soul"; m-ravali = b-ravali = b-reli = ph-reli, "many"; p-rke = b-rke, etc. Thus the identity of abs, aps, aphs, and absh, aps /sic/, and aphsh is beyond doubt. What, then, does abs or aphsh mean?

A 193

First of all it must be said that in the Abkhaz language nouns are preceded by "a," corresponding to the meaning of the article le or la in the French language. In compounds this "a" is often dropped. Let us, by way of example, take identical words in the Grusian and Abkhaz languages:

A G 192

Grusian	Abkhaz	
khalakhi	a-khalakh	town
nathla	a-nathra	baptism
kambechi	a-kambash	buffalo
nana	a-nan	mother
kharthueli	a-khirthua	Grusian
lazi	a-laz	Laz
kaba	a-kaba	dress
/2/		
kaltha	a-kaltha	tails /of a coat/
kherkhi	a-khuarkhi	file
makrateli	a-makratil	scissors
kibe	a-kiba	stairs, ladder
gemo	a-gema	taste
khvabi	a-khvab	kettle
ugheli (Svan /Swan/: ughu)	a-ughu	yoke
guli (Svan:gui)	a-gu	heart
zari	a-zar	lament, sobbing

G 193

Frequently the Grusian language, too, has recourse to the method of forming nouns from verbal roots, with the addition at the end of the noun of the auxiliary verb li or ari (1) [illegible].

1. ari = is; in the Grusian language and

G 193

/2 cont./ in its dialects this verb appears either in the form a (e.g., katsi-a = it is a man), or in the form li (ara-li = is not), or as ri or re (akhlo-re - it is near). Of these, the form ari is the most frequent in Grusian; re, ri, ro, in Mingrel; in Svan, li, ari; and in Abkhaz, l, r.

A G 197

(3rd person singular indicative, meaning "is"). For example, deg or dgi means "stand, stand firm"; a-deg or a-dgi = stand up; a-dgi-li = solid ground, earth, dry land. In the same way, nuskhe = count, m-nuskhe-li = counting, a-m-nuskhe-li = accountant.

A G 197

So the root consists merely of phs or phsh, which in many languages of the Caucasus, including Abkhaz and Grusian, has various related meanings: river, water, moisture, soul, spring, etc. For example, in Circassian, phdze or phse means "river, water"; in Grusian phsha means "river, brook, spring-water," phshe-na or phshi-nva = breathing, sigh, smell; m-phshueni- breathing, soul, spirit; phsa = to pour, phseli = urine; in Abkhaz, aphs = soul, aphsha = wind, air; adzi /see foreign text/ = water, river, brook; adzi-khi = well; adzi-zhi = lake; amshin = sea, etc.

A 101 174

It is well known that many ancient peoples got their names from the waters on whose banks they lived. We will recall, for instance, from ancient Slavic history, the Pomoryane, Polaby, Buzhane, and others (2).

2. "Settling in Europe, the Slavs gave to the rivers those most ancient names, brought over by them from the East, which originally were used as designations for river, or water in general. In this way the names Sava, Drava, Odra (Oder), Ra, Upa, Oka, Don, Dunai, Dvina, are of Aryan origin, and related forms and roots with the above-mentioned general meaning are found in

/24 cont./

584 from which she does not emerge until a feast is held in the big house. Then she is led into the house, and one of the elderly friends of the family, or the father himself, puts a piece of liver on a spit and begins to pray and to express wishes that the couple before him may be happy, prolific, etc.

When the groom returns from the house of his bride's parents to that of his father, he again is not allowed to show himself to his parents and older relatives. This, too, would be considered /25/ indecent. He does not appear until after the feast has been given by his father. Now the same blessings and wishes that were given when the bride was led out of her amhara are repeated, and the groom gives presents to his mother, father, uncle, foster father, and in general to all older relatives. This feast bears the name aphkhasharkhe (portion of shame, remover of shame).

585 After the preparation of the dowry, the bride's parents
[583] invite their future son-in-law in order to entrust their daughter to him; at the appointed time the groom comes to get her with his friends and her girl-friends. On the way home with the bride,
[533] the marriage song bedniera (happiness) is sung, there is trick-
[526] riding on horses, pistol-shooting, etc. When they are approaching the house of the groom, they send someone ahead to announce the arrival of the bride to the groom's father and mother. Such a messenger stops somewhere near the gates of the house and
[502] without a word fires a pistol in the air. In the house he is offered some honey or sugar.

Meanwhile the wedding procession reaches the house. Here the friends and girl-friends amuse themselves for a while with a huge round loaf of wheaten bread, throwing it three times over the bride and over the house and breaking it into pieces, which are picked up by those present. After this the bride is led into the house, at the entrance of which two men hold swords crossed overhead. At the threshold she is offered honey or sugar, with the words, "May God give you a tongue as sweet." After the bride enters the house she is handed a cup filled with grains of gomi, on top of which an egg has been placed. Then she is led three times around the hearth while she scatters the grains of gomi. The bride is then seated, and they hand her a little boy

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [795] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes marula (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pistol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both [302] sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [268] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few

/26 cont./

602 [606] avoids pronouncing the name of his wife. When the wife's father and mother first visit their son-in-law, he must offer them presents in the same way as when he himself with his wife first visits the wife's parents.

V.

Mourning and Burial of the Dead

758 574 In general the Abkhaz are very compassionate towards the sick and never leave alone a person who is seriously ill. When the villagers are informed that one of their number is seriously ill, all of them without fail will visit him, inquire about his illness, encourage him, and try to cheer him. The patient is visited not only by his relatives, but also by all the other villagers, irrespective of their title or means. They usually come to visit the patient in the evening and spend the whole night with him, singing, dancing, or telling stories, making jokes, etc., with the object of somehow /27/ cheering the invalid and relieving his sufferings in one way or another. The sick are treated with home remedies, old wise-women say prayers over them, etc.

763 As soon as a patient dies, the women instantly break out in deafening wails and soul-shaking screams, at the same time tearing out their hair, scratching their bodies, beating themselves on the face and head, and so on. Meanwhile the whole 764 neighborhood gathers, and the weeping and sobbing increase. Some women closely related to the deceased begin to beat themselves, striking their heads against something or other; the others try to soothe and quiet them. But all these admonitions frequently have no effect on the frenzied mourners, who, as a result of the blows they have inflicted upon their own heads and bodies and of beating their heads against something, fall down as if dead. When quiet finally prevails, the funeral ceremony is arranged. The next of kin sew themselves mourning apparel, ● [203] and messengers are sent out with notices and invitations to the relatives, foster parents, friends, and acquaintances of the deceased; his fellow villagers on the other hand are obliged

/27 cont./

764 [203] to come to the mourning ceremony without being invited. The deceased is put in a coffin. The women in mourning apparel, barefooted, their dresses torn, bloody scratches on their faces, and their hair loose, arrange themselves behind the coffin. From the other side the male and female mourners approach the coffin. The arrangement of the lamentations is as follows. Let us suppose that four or five women are coming to bewail the deceased. As soon as they enter the yard, they immediately start weeping and shouting "avav," and at the same time they put their fingers to their temples and continue to scratch their faces with them down to the chin until they have finished their "avav." The women sitting by the coffin answer their "avav" with the same exclamation. The mourners slowly approach the house. Their wails and sobs gradually become louder; finally they enter the house, where the real communal mourning takes place. The mourners enter the house, beating their foreheads and breasts; they kneel down before the coffin and thus bewail the deceased.

In another part of the house the belongings of the deceased are put on display, his clothes and his weapons. After the mourning of the deceased, weeping and sobbing are done over his belongings also.

Sympathy for the relatives of the deceased is expressed by [195] visitors in the following manner: "Had this but not happened to you; had you but heard of my death instead, etc."

764 608 /28/ The foster mother of the deceased or her children, when they come to bewail the ward, break out in wails and cries even a verst from the house. In the yard they are met by people who have been stationed there for this purpose and who lead them by the hand into the house. This does not prevent the new arrivals from scratching their cheeks and necks on the way until they bleed, nor from beating their heads against the house-posts until they fall down before the coffin half-dead and with tears flowing. The foster father and his children likewise beat their heads and faces.

764 [1965] On the day of the funeral, lamentation for the deceased is general. Then, after the mourning, a funeral repast is arranged and all the guests are treated to bread, wine, and lenten fare, and by evening the deceased is buried.

3:Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvlbzha

The Megrelians also know this septenary, *shk'vit'-ul-i*, in honour of which the majority of families let loose a cow with a pierced ear. Her milk is not used for food. The bullock is offered in sacrifice, while the heifer is reared. The well-known Pshav *Kviria* is, perhaps, related to Megrelian Àyt'ar. I have pointed out above that among the Megrelians the god of cattle-breeding is called *Zhini Ant'ar*. *Ant'ar* is the Abkhasian *Àyt'ar*, while *zhini*, in Megrelian, "high," "heavenly," is equivalent to Abkhasian *khikh*. The Abkhasians, however, appear to have split up *Zhini Ant'ar* into two gods, *Àyt'ar* and *Khikh*. They appeal for help to the latter in the spring, when the cattle are taken to the mountain pastures. They pray to him under the shadows of trees. On four pillarets are placed poles, which are covered with leaves of trees, particularly of the wild hazel tree, the oak, or yoke-elm. A cheese curd wrapped in chestnut tree bark is placed on this table (*ashwamkyàt'*)* which is covered with greenery; on it is also placed *àtchamak'wa*, a kind of millet porridge, cooked with cheese. In front of it is also placed milk gruel. Women are not allowed to be present. The head of the family, standing with uncovered head in front of this green table, called *ashwamkyàt'*, prays that *Khikh*, the great part of the great deity Àyt'ar, may increase his cattle and send all good things. While praying he spills a little of the gruel towards the sea and towards the mountains, uttering *wootsw*. The prayer over, he takes the cheese curd and passes over it cross-wise a hazel "knife", which is really a stick cut into a tapering, knife-like shape, after which he actually cuts the cheese curd with a real knife.[1] This ceremony of prayer is followed by a dinner, the remains of which are not cleared away. Three of the supports or legs of *ashwamkyàt'* are cut off (each with one stroke), the fourth remains there untouched. It seems to me probable that the table itself received its name from this act of cutting. Megrelians also know this *ashwamkyàt'*, which they call *sumket* (*sumi keti*), "three sticks," derived, perhaps, from *sumkvat'*, in which case it would denote "three cuttings" (*kvat'* < *kvat'ua* = to cut, to fell), i.e. "cut with three strokes."[2]

The Georgian Mountaineers also have their *Anator-i*.

(c) *Alòshkintr* (*alòskintr*).

These cakes are also put aside. The prayer now takes three new

* The combination *shw* represents a labialized variety of "sh"; cf. "*shw*", p. 120, note *. In *ashwamkyàt'* the "sh" is not only labialised, but also lingualized or lotised, which lingualization is not, however, represented in the transcription. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] By using the wooden knife, the Abkhasian probably pays tribute to that very ancient time when his ancestors used that kind of knife.

[2] If the first part *shwow* represents the Megrelian word "three", one should keep in mind not the "K'art'lianized" form *sumi*, but the original, Tubal-Kainian *shumi*; see MARR, *From the Journies to Svania* (in Russian), in *Khrist. Vostok*, ii, pp. 17–18. (Editor, *Khrist. Vost.*)

A [757 cont.]
233 unfavorable for it, for example, the cattle are therefore small. The herdsmen wandered with the stock from pasture to pasture, and from time to time built [Fig. 449 appears here] anew their
A wickerwork huts (see above, p. 6), which they took along with
241 them. Now agriculture seems to predominate; the major crop is maize, but earlier it was spiked millet or, less often, wheat. Besides these, they also cultivate beans, flax, hemp, cotton,

C
411

Fig. 449. Cherkess dagger with bone handle, colored green, and silver studs (1/3 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A
241 tobacco (that grown in Sukhumi is known as the best in the Caucasus), rice, climbing cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, many grapes and fruits: apples, pears, plums, figs, chestnuts,
A pomegranates, nuts, and others. Berry bushes grow on the slopes
● 242 in great number, but their fruit is almost never used in the economy, as in Georgia.

/46 cont./

782 pronounces a prayer the second time, cutting off pieces from
231 different parts of the animal and offering them to Aithar by throwing them on the red-hot coals.

11.

Azhvephshaa (Abn-intsvakhu)

782 Azhvephshaa is the god of the forests and wild animals.
224 Hunters sacrifice to him before setting out on a hunt, usu-
[776 ally the middle or at the end of December. For the sacrifice,
796] they jointly buy a ram or a goat. When it is roasted, the oldest huntsman prays to Azhvephshaa to send success for their undertaking; at the conclusion of the prayers, he throws small pieces of roasted meat and a piece of incense on the coals. Each of the remaining hunters repeats the prayer in turn, adding his own wishes and indicating the particular animal he would like to kill, while throwing pieces of incense on the coals.

12.

Dzhadzha and Anaphanga

782 Dzhadzha is the patroness of the crops. Prayers to her
24 are offered twice a year: in March, at the beginning of
[776 spring, and in November, after the maize has been stored.
796] Praying to Dzhadzha is not accompanied by any special solemnity; it is performed quietly by each individual family. Rich landowners sometimes invite their former dependents to the prayer, particularly those who have taken part in the sowing and reaping of their crops. On the day set aside for prayer, dishes made exclusively of grain and fruits grown by the master of the house are prepared. After the food has been placed on the table, the oldest member of the family /47/ addresses a prayer to Dzhadzha, thanking him for the good harvest or begging him to send everything in abundance. For the spring prayer to Dzhadzha, all the dishes prepared are lenten.

[767 cont.]

776 good and bad. The Hammerers (Ašatsatšap'atsa) decide the fate of the newborn and write it on their foreheads (lakhintsara). As nature gods they worship the protector of cattle (Aft'ar), of goats (Džabran), of wild game (Ažvepša), of the earth (Adabna), of the rainbow (Atsakwa), and the protectress of the water (Dzlan dzahwas'), of the wind (P'šarn'a), of seeds (Dž'adž'a and Anap'anga), of dogs (Ališkantra), of bees (Ananagund), and others. Just like the Osset, they have a protector of raiders (Eirig-ātsnykh) or Tšugurukhnykh) and one of smiths (Šyošu). The latter two, which are called upon very frequently, may be of a manistic type, derived from the belief in souls, as may be the protective spirit of the hearth (Ašа'ara), the mother-goddess (Anana'a), and the "outer ones" (adnqa) (see p. 22). The Abkhaz attribute to the god of thunder (cf. p. 87) the same power and abilities as the Osset do to the holy Elias, but he is in part confused with the incomprehensible highest god (see p. 61) and is endowed with his abilities, and therefore also the shape of the local supreme god (Anybs-nykha-dudrüp's), whose home is supposed to be the
• 224 [782] mountain Dudrüpsh at Lykhny. ---Hunters sacrifice a male goat or a ram to the god of game (Ažvepša) before the hunt, which begins after the vintage [768] and lasts until about the new year, so that he will grant them the desired prey from his herds. He gives them, however, only those animals that he and his daughter have already eaten and that he has restored to life by wrapping [825] their bones in the skin after his meal. White animals are the herdsmen of Ažvepša and therefore must not be slain.

Evil souls, similar to the western European vampires, 776 tear the eyes, heart, liver, etc. out of the body and suck the milk from the cows. They have different powers and accordingly ride on frogs, mice, cats, or on foxes and wolves. Their chief (Roskipi) lives on the mountain Tabakona, where every year they must account for Mary's Assumption and must exhibit the plundered body-parts. For this reason the Abkhaz put up [788] crosses during fasts, carry lights on their heads, and on the previous night stay up and shoot and sing. The evil souls can at the same time stay among men and on the mountain Tabakona, since

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

their enemies, the god ordered the bird *aqaqab* to watch over them; the Megrelians who have the same belief, call this bird *kakabi*.[1] As soon as this bird sights at a distance a hunter or some other enemy, it soars high up into the sky, and by screeching warns the game of the approach of danger. That is why this bird is always found near the beasts.

The god of the mountains demands respect. He punishes severely those bold enough to bathe in clear, transparent mountain streams. The Abkhaz shepherds do not, therefore, bathe in these streams, being afraid of drawing upon themselves the displeasure of the god of the mountains: the nude body is said to defile the waters of the mountain spirit.

3. *Azhwèyp'shad* (gods of beasts and hunting)[2]

Azhwèyp'shad are gods of beasts and of hunting. They dwell in impassable forests, and lead an ordinary family life. To them are subjected all game, and without their will no one can shoot bird or beast. These gods kill for themselves some wild animal, boil and eat its meat; they wrap the bones in its skin and then revive the animal by striking it with a wand. Only after an animal has been resurrected in this way is a hunter granted the right to shoot it, and then only the particular hunter for whom the gods have destined it: no one else, try as much as he will, can kill it. Of this the Abkhasians are aware, and they employ the following characteristic greeting when they encounter a fellow hunter: *zp'sə-aakhèw yùzp'shùr*, "Which is destined to die, that (animal) is waiting for thee!" the answer being, "For both of us is waiting!"

A few words may be said about the way in which Abkhasians divine the success or failure of their hunting on the day of the Assumption. Before starting out the hunter takes a sharp knife and repeatedly strikes the table, cutting nicks in it. Passing his palm over the table, he says: "Whether thou sayest fifteen, whether I say fifteen, whoever says fifteen (it will be) thirty, fifteen." If the nicks thus cut number exactly fifteen it is a good omen; the gods will reward him with game.

The Abkhasians learnt this method in the following manner. A hunter once followed a wild goat, but he could not shoot it. It led him into the thick of a wood, where he saw a huge cauldron, around which sat gods. They invited him to join them. Nearby stood a goat. They killed the latter and invited the hunter to partake of the meal. When the gods began to throw bones into the hide, the hunter concealed one of them, putting in its place a small stick (or a small knife,

[1] The word is consonant with the Georgian *kakabi*, partridge.
[2] The term is construed as plural.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

224 539 according to another version). The gods revived the goat and destined it to fall a prey to our hunter. On the following morning, on his way back, he sighted a wild goat, killed it, and to his horror and amazement in its body he found his stick (knife).[1]

These *azhwėyp'shaă* have eternally youthful daughters, who often have love affairs with the hunters whom they reward with plenty of game. They select bachelor hunters as their object of love. One of them, however, once fell madly in love with a married Abkhaz; their friendship lasted for many years; often she herself visited him. One day, at dawn, the hunter's wife found the daughter of the gods, whose beauty was more than earthly, in the arms of her husband. The two were asleep on the balcony of the corncrib. A light breeze had disturbed the golden curls of the lovely goddess, and a few tresses lay in the dust. The wife acted in a manner born of pure love and sympathy. Quietly approaching the sleeping couple she lifted up the golden curls of the beautiful goddess and placed them so that they would not fall into the dust. When the goddess awakened she was so struck with the magnanimity of the beautiful wife of her beloved that she restored her husband to her, and forever forbade her sister-goddesses to have love affairs with married men.

224 Hunting is a sacred sport to the Abkhasians, and it is the custom never to talk of the hunter when he is hunting, but to say, if necessary, "he has gone somewhere." The hunters divide their prey into equal proportions; the head of the animal or bird, however, is given in addition to the one who killed it. Anybody whom the hunters encounter by chance also gets an equal share. Nor are the neighbours forgotten. Each goes up to the prey, and sprinkling it and also the successful hunter with some grain, says: "May gods grant thee a better one on another occasion!"

[536] Any kind of falsehood or evasion of the rules of hunting consecrated by custom is severely punished by order from above. The following story may be quoted as an illustration of this:—

[539] A well-known hunter once killed a wild goat, and another hunter, having heard a shot, ran up to him. The successful hunter said: "Behind that corner there is hiding another goat which you can easily follow up; it will be better to take home a kill each than to divide one between." The second hunter ran in the direction indicated but found no goat there. For this lie the gods punished not only the hunter himself but also his whole *gvari*; they have never since shot a single head of game.

[1] This story is written down from the words of A. Kardava, a Megrelian shepherd. In his version the wild boar figures instead of the goat, and *tqashi-map'a*, king of the woods, instead of *Azhwėyp'shaă*.

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[231] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[541] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/44 cont./

7.

782
585
[076] The Prayer Ceremony in Honor of Azhahara

The Abkhaz call the protector or genius of the house and hearth by the name Azhahara in whose honor is performed the ceremony for a young married couple in the stage of their marriage before they have appeared together before their elders and the young woman is for the first time led into her husband's main house, or when the bride is invited into her father's house. One of the oldest members of the family sticks pieces of the heart and liver of a sacrificial animal on a spit and begs Azhahara to protect the young couple at home and out of doors.

8.

Alishkantra

782
231
[076] Alishkantra is the "mistress" of dogs. In the opinion of the Abkhaz, the owner of good dogs will also be fortunate in the multiplication of his cattle; good fortune in dogs is associated with good fortune in all domestic animals. Therefore before praying to other god-protectors of domestic and wild animals, the Abkhaz prays to Alishkantra to grant him luck with good dogs and the opportunity to raise and breed them.

9.

/45/ A Prayer in Honor of Zhabran

[076]
[796]
[262] Zhabran is the protector of animals. Every Abkhaz owning cattle performs the prayer-ceremony in his honor on "Cheese Saturday." For this they prepare suluguni (a big cheese) called "sacred cheese"; bread dough is placed on the hearth, in which a man puts a core of suluguni, whereupon he prays, "Prefer me to all those pronouncing your name;

/45 cont./

782 make my cattle multiply; make them increase to such an
•231 extent that in the future I may pray to you and offer you a cheese as big as this loaf of bread and my courtyard will have no room for all my cattle. Preserve my cattle from all trouble and misfortunes both at home and outside; grant that my cattle will lose only old hair and dung; grant that my herd will be so large that an animal walking in the rear will be unable to overtake one running in the front; may the calves play like young bears and shine like young stallions. This I ask of you." Then the person praying puts three walnut branches in the bread dough and, striking against the ceiling, exclaims, "Voots! chiphsh!" (a call to summon cattle). The same ceremony is performed on the Thursday of "Cheese-
[796] week" in honor of the protector of goats; it is called Dzhabran.

10.

A Prayer in Honor of Aithar

[796] Aithar is the protector of domestic cattle and the farm economy. The prayers to him are held on a Saturday,
[796] except during Lent, because offerings to him must consist of milk products, and among the rich the offering is a milk-fed calf. The customary dish at this time is a thin gruel made with the milk of a cow that has recently calved. The shepherds stand around a kettle or pot filled with gruel; the oldest of them, holding a wax candle, pronounces a prayer: "Aithar, grant me superiority above all those who pronounce your name." He then begs Aithar to increase his herds and to protect them from beasts of prey. Upon concluding /46/ the prayer, the shepherd throws three spoonfuls of gruel into a brazier with coals standing nearby, and the participants eat the rest. If the inhabitants of the whole village or a part of it perform the ceremony in honor of Aithar, then a calf is sacrificed, which is slaughtered by the most respected old man, who first pronounces a prayer. After the meat of the calf has been cooked or roasted, the same old man

/46 cont./

[782 23] pronounces a prayer the second time, cutting off pieces from different parts of the animal and offering them to Aithar by throwing them on the red-hot coals.

11.

Azhvephshaa (Abn-intsvakhu)

[782 224 076 096] Azhvephshaa is the god of the forests and wild animals. Hunters sacrifice to him before setting out on a hunt, usually the middle or at the end of December. For the sacrifice, they jointly buy a ram or a goat. When it is roasted, the oldest huntsman prays to Azhvephshaa to send success for their undertaking; at the conclusion of the prayers, he throws small pieces of roasted meat and a piece of incense on the coals. Each of the remaining hunters repeats the prayer in turn, adding his own wishes and indicating the particular animal he would like to kill, while throwing pieces of incense on the coals.

12.

Dzhadzha and Anaphanga

[782 24 076 096] Dzhadzha is the patroness of the crops. Prayers to her are offered twice a year: in March, at the beginning of spring, and in November, after the maize has been stored. Praying to Dzhadzha is not accompanied by any special solemnity; it is performed quietly by each individual family. Rich landowners sometimes invite their former dependents to the prayer, particularly those who have taken part in the sowing and reaping of their crops. On the day set aside for prayer, dishes made exclusively of grain and fruits grown by the master of the house are prepared. After the food has been placed on the table, the oldest member of the family /47/ addresses a prayer to Dzhadzha, thanking him for the good harvest or begging him to send everything in abundance. For the spring prayer to Dzhadzha, all the dishes prepared are lenten.

/47 cont./

782 241 [776] The Abkhaz asks of Anaphanga, the goddess of crops: "Wherever I draw my furrow and strike with iron and with implement, may an abundance of grain be granted me; grant happiness to the sower and to the consumer." During reaping, when the sheaves are first brought home, the Abkhaz prays in honor of Anaphanga; during the fast of Assumption, however, a cross is made of the ears; kernels of maize and beans are fastened to a candle to avert possible harm by evil spirits, e.g., by Dzhadzha herself. This [776] Dzhadzha is an ugly goddess, short and fat; when she comes into a field she exclaims, "Natsvis, natsvis" (little finger! little finger!), i.e., the wish that the maize in that field grow no higher than a little finger, but if one pursues Dzhadzha with the words, "Raki dzaki, raki dzaki" ("cubit-span, cubit-span"), she leaves the field and her wish does not come true.

[243] Before the threshing of the gomi /millet/ the Abkhaz pray to the great goddesses to keep the whole family in good health and to permit the whole household in future, and at the head the lady of the house herself, to gather at the beater for the threshing of the gomi (satsekhveli).

13.

A Prayer for the Bees

782 231 The Abkhaz bake a round loaf of bread with cheese, take it to the bee-garden, and pray to Ananagunda for the preservation of their bees; upon returning home, they break the loaf and eat it without looking at one another, for which some stand facing one door, some another.

14.

Prayer to the Sun and the Moon

782 821 The Abkhaz addresses the sun with the following prayer: "Sunlight, withhold not your benevolence from us, warmth

/58 cont./

731 donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and
789 put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva
[539] dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins
[825] to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

25.

Saints

776 Independent of the general worship of all the deities dis-
778 cussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny,
[184] Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke
782 their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in
[796] fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.

● [231] - On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

/58 cont./

heifer is selected from the herd, and in the evening it is brought into the house where the family that is invoking the church's grace has its permanent residence. A supper is prepared, consisting of cooked or roast mutton, and the whole family washes and puts on clean linen. The head of the family takes a wax candle in one hand and in the other the rope tied around the calf's neck; he addresses the /59/ cathedral with a prayer for his protection and that of his family; he states that the calf will be dedicated to the church and that all its male offspring will be sacrificed to it, and that, instead of heifers, rams will be sacrificed. After this prayer an incision is made in the calf's ear; from this time on it is considered inviolable and cannot be used for food. On the day of its dedication to the cathedral the calf must spend the night in the house with the family.

If an inhabitant of one of the three above-mentioned villages moves away, he is obliged to bring an offering each year to the cathedral in the village of his birth. Girls from these villages who marry inhabitants of other villages are not exempt from this rule. They as well as their children are still regarded as under the protection of the cathedrals of Lykhny, Pitsunda, or Ilori and are therefore obliged to offer sacrifices to them.

M. Dzhanashvili

/A supplement on pp. 60-64, containing Abkhaz sayings and proverbs, is omitted in the translation; see foreign text./

[757 cont.]

K 233 The Kabardin still occupy themselves principally with the raising of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses, which have Arabic blood, are taller and more powerfully built than the C 241 Abkhaz horses, and are famous for their beauty and endurance. The other Cherkess have changed over more to agriculture since the end of the fighting with the Russians.

They clear the land that they wish to seed, burn off the grass in the spring, as is also done on the pastures and meadows, and then plow and harrow with the brush-harrow [Strauchegge] (see above, p. 686 [untranslated]); until recently there was no fertilization with manure. Earlier, when the land around a village was exhausted, they merely dismantled the huts and settled in another place.

C 256 While the grain is ground in a water or horse mill, millet is husked by means of a pitted surface [Anke] (see above, p. 693 [untranslated]) and a wooden disk turned by hand, as is customary in Finland, and ground with a hand-mill by the women.

C A 231 Bees are often kept here, as in Abkhazia.

The beehives resemble those commonly used by us; they are cut out of linden bark or plaited out of willow twigs and smeared with clay and cow manure. As protection from the rain, a thick straw plaiting is laid on top. [758] Swarms that have flown out are caught with a bark cover fastened on a stick. In July and August, the hives are placed in the forests of the foothills, otherwise near the villages.

A C 462 The women have the same tasks as among the mountain peoples; among the Abkhaz, however, the men help in A 2 the fields, fruit orchards, vineyards, and at other tasks. Among [281] other things, the women also produce morocco leather (tsuš), from which belts, shoes, bedding, etc. are made. Besides ves- A E [212] sels and utensils, the men carve beautiful spoons out of wood and [293] horn, build wagons (ǯkū) with two disk-wheels that are hewn out of a single piece of wood and the axle turns with them (cf. Fig. 416 [in untranslated portion]). They used to produce their own A 2 gunpowder, leeching the saltpeter (gin-khuš = powder-salt) for [389] it from sheep manure. [Fig. 450 appears here.]

C 796 C [782] [769 cont.] and lighted with lamps, is set up in the house of an elder of the kin group. An animal is sacrificed in honor of the god, and after the feast the cheese is distributed among the participants as a magical remedy. Other festivals are celebrated: for the new year and for Easter, in March, when one first fasts, then slaughters an offering in the sacred grove, and enjoys himself by shooting at eggs, etc.; at the beginning of the harvest, when roasted unripe wheat with sour milk, and later other kinds of grain and fruit, are eaten as festive dishes; in October when the plants wither, etc.

A 796 782 The Abkhaz show their reverence for the gods and spirits at given occasions or on certain holidays by the sacrificial offering of animals, milk, bread, and other things, and by prayers, which are often constructed with a wealth of words and are poetically exalted.

Thus, on New Year's Eve they kneel in prayer, sprinkling incense on a coal-pan, around a rectangular cheese-cake (suluguni)--this custom is called Kalinda, cf. the Kolinda of the Rumanians and others--and on New Year's Day the father of the house lays wheat bread with an egg baked in it on everyone's breast, and he directs the "heart-prayer" (gunykhwa) to God, that they may be protected from heart disease. On Christmas Day between the first crow of the cock and daybreak he begs that they be spared from stomach ailments; afterwards everyone eats a chicken and four small pieces of cheese-bread (kwakwari). The celebration of Syosu is also held on New Year's Eve, especially by the smiths. Here the father of the house prays to him for health and protection against harm from their work tools, and he throws into the fire pieces of curd-cake and of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animals: a sheep or calf for the father of the house, a rooster for each member of the family [Familie].

A 233 [781] C [776] A [231] Before driving the animals into the mountains and after driving them from there, the herdsmen sacrifice a ram in honor of the god of lightning (Ap'i, khakhikal = he who lives above, called Sible by the Cherkess) and pray that he spare them and their herds. When an animal is killed by lightning, [770] the owner calls out all the villagers; while singing and dancing

[770 cont.]

231 (atlar-tšoup'), they lay the animal on a quickly erected, three-
[782] meter-high framework or in a tree. The owner sacrifices an ox and prays to be spared in the future; then they eat the meat of the sacrificial animal, bread, and cheese, drink wine, and feast
766 the entire day. The Abkhaz proceed in the same way for a person struck by lightning, but no one may weep lest the god become angry (see p. 87).

789 During drought one also turns to Ap'i to send rain; an
[782] ox is sacrificed, and at the feast songs of thanks and praise (antšva-ryssva) are sung in alternating chant. In order to evoke rain magic similar to that customarily practiced among the Balkan peoples is used (cf. also p. 64). The girls from the village stricken with drought place a female doll embodying the drought on a donkey and lead it to the river; here they put the doll on a raft made of twigs and straw, ignite it, and allow it to drift. They pull the donkey by force through the water, and if he brays, there will be rain.

755 Various gods are called upon in case of illness. Ague,
[753] delirium, and the like accompanying serious illness are attributed to the presence of the supreme god (Antsar mz) in the body of the sufferer. In order to cure him, they sing and dance about him and even force him to do the same; then they sacrifice bread
[783] and a goat or sheep in the vicinity of the house, during which no woman may be present; an old man with a candle circles the sick person and pleads with the god to forgive him and deliver him. He also prays afterwards to Michael-Gabriel.

In case of fever they look for help from the "Mother of the Waters"; she lives, according to them, in a clear lake or
[771] spring, is beautiful, has brown hair and laughing eyes, and likes to live for a while with a man, like the mermaids. An old woman touches the water with some object belonging to the feverish person and begs the goddess to release him if she has enthralled him. Then she ladles up a few drops of water on some alder-leaves and holds them over the fire in the house so that the fever may leave as quickly as the water on the leaves. Finally the old woman moves away quickly, with the wish that the fever, too,

[770 cont.]

755 might leave. As soon as the afflicted person is able, he himself goes to the water with a prayer-woman; there he kneels and
[782] offers up a hen to the mother of the waters, a rooster to her husband, and a candle to each of them and to her female servant (Abza'avabzatšav = benefactress, intercessor). The woman prays and strokes the sick person on the back for "deliverance" (azati).

If someone suffers from jaundice or debility, [771] the "irreproachable" elders lead him to the river, lay his clothing, silver articles, etc. on both banks, and make a bridge of twisted yarn over the river; the prayer-woman then circles the sick person with a doll and prays to the rainbow in the name of the Eliap'ši, to the mother of the waters, and to her husband. She
[782] casts into the water pieces of the food that was brought along: roasted chickens, tongue-shaped flat cakes, etc., and she allows the doll to float downstream in a gourd with a burning candle, while she prays that the goddess amuse herself with it rather than with the sick person. Finally she gives the latter "deliverance," and he may not look back on the way home (cf. p. 924 f. [untranslated]).

231 When rinderpest struck, the Kemirkehe used to dig a
789 tunnel in a steep river-bank and in the middle of this a pit in which they fastened a black cat with a silver belt. They covered the pit with boards and earth, ignited a fire on top by rubbing two sticks together, and drove the cattle through the river and the tunnel, to the accompaniment of the priests' litany. Afterwards the cat was freed.

842 The above-mentioned threefold prayer at the water is aimed at fertility when one "leads to the water" a young woman
844 for the first time, during which an egg is thrown in, and, in the case of a woman in childbed, food for the infant.

787 The Abkhaz read signs for future events, for a favorable
[821] or unfavorable outcome for undertakings, from the stars, from the form of the moon, from meeting certain animals or human beings, and also, in the manner of the Tatars, from the cracks in a sheep's shoulder-blade that has been cast into the fire (see Vol. II, p. 325).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibZha

796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alòshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[262] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[254] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[776] In the opinion of the commission, *Alòshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[231] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight."[1]

The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If
[821] someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri*, *vàri*, *khəzò*, *jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*wàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khəzò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

776 (*d*) *Àmza-nəhwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

* See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the
[104] production of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ʒ" (the ancient Arabic *'ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of
[171] Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Aralès* (cf. *Alòshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Araia*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzhq

On this day also they " lay the table ", that is, prepare a dinner, for the souls of the deceased, unless the day happens to be one of abstinence, i.e. Wednesday or Friday. In the latter event the feast takes place on the following day.

(e) *Àdsyla-nɔ̀ĥwa*

On the same day of the Assumption is observed *Àdsyla-nɔ̀ĥwa* (cf. II (10)). The children are taken to a meadow where they are told to place their right legs against a tree. Each holding an *akwakwàr* in the right hand, they remain meekly in this position until the eldest in the family has addressed the prayer to " the spirit of the tree ", entreating " the great part of the deity of the tree " to safeguard them from giddiness, from falling off the tree, and from injuries. The children must eat their *akwakwàr* without removing their legs from the tree.

(f) *Anàna-gùnda* (the goddess of bees)

This is both a spring and a summer feast.

In the spring, when the bees begin to hive, the eldest (" pure ") woman of the family takes some hirse (Geo. *p'etvi*) and an egg, and enters the apiary, where she passes the offerings three times over the hives, and prays to the goddess of the bees, *Anàna-gùnda :* " Submitting these as a pledge that the established offering will be made at the proper time, I humbly entreat thee, *Anàna-gùnda*, to be the guardian of our bees ; safeguard them from all illnesses, multiply them, and grant them a good crop ! " Hirse and the egg are hung over the apiary.

In the summer, between the 15th July and the end of August, before the gathering of the first honeycombs, more during August, on a Thursday or Saturday, the promised offering to the goddess *Anàna-gùnda* is made. A large corncake (*a-mgal*), stuffed with cheese, is baked, and placed on one of the hives ; also an egg. The family kneel in front of the offering, and the " pure " woman again invokes the mercy of *Anàna-gùnda* upon the honey bees, and says an improvised prayer. The family repeat a long drawn out *dămen*.

After the ceremony, she divides the corncakes crosswise, into four parts, with two strokes of the knife ; and cuts these into smaller pieces. The family sit down there and then and dine. They do not forget the neighbours, sending a small piece each. The remains are placed in a basket and hung up in the apiary. Everybody passing by is obliged to enter the apiary and bless the honey bees and, scattering about a little hirse, eat a piece of corncake.

In ancient times when the Abkhasians irreproachably observed all the rites, the gods were more merciful to them. Thus, the goddess

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Thus, the goddess
of the bees as a sign of her good disposition towards a given family 231
placed an egg (the egg of *Anâna-gûnda*) in one of the hives. No matter 776
how much honey they took from that hive, there would always be
a plentiful supply of it.[1]

IV. K'IRSA

Christmas is one of the four chief holidays [2] of the year. Abkhasians 796
call it *K'irsa* (Megr. *K'irse*), which denotes Christ. An Abkhaz
considers it a great disgrace if he fails on this day to kill a goat or
some other animal. On this day " the table is laid " also for the souls [769]
of ancestors.

(*a*) *Agwə-nə̀ĥwa*

For some families it is obligatory to make an offering early in
the morning on this day to *Agwə-nə̀ĥwa*, for which *akwakwdr* are
baked. The supplicant entreats that *Agwə-nə̀ĥwa* grant them the
warmth of his eyes and his heart. In translation the word denotes,
" praying to heart." This " praying " is also known to the Gurians, [191]
under the name of " praying for the womb " (Geo. *Mutslis salotsavi*);
Megrelians call it *Khatsitsi*.[3] According to I. Kipshidze, it is the New
Year's Day breakfast.[4] In my opinion it is nothing more than a survival
of the supplication described below.

(*b*) *Got'anûa* (*sharp'ə-nə̀ĥwa*)

Some *gvari*-s have preserved to this day the following custom.
On Christmas Eve, the family go to bed very early; they rise, however,
at midnight, and begin praying. Enough chickens are killed to provide [262]
one for every member of the family (blackbirds also may be used), [782]
or in their place a young goat; *akwakwdr* baked. All this is offered to
Got'anûa; the food is consumed immediately after the prayer is
ended, and the remains, if any, are not left but burnt without fail.
All return to bed. The dawn must find them asleep. In Megrelian
got'ənua denotes morning-twilight, dawn, to grow light, to dawn,
the Abkhasian equivalent of which is *sharp'-nə̀ĥwa*, the morning prayer;
the Megrelian term, however, is more in use.

I quote here the following story: " A female slave of a family,

[1] *Anâna*, in my opinion, is derived from *an*, mother; *gûnda*, probably from *gundi*, a swarm, a collection of something.

[2] Namely, the New Year, Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas.

[3] *Khatsitsi—khatsutsi* is called also a bride. (Cf. I. Kipshidze, *Gram. of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. *khat'utsi*.) (Ed. *Khrist. Vostok.*)

[4] *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. (where is also a reference to the explanation of the same word in Georgian by V. Beridze, *Sitqvishona*, s.v., Ed. *Kh. V.*).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzh9

who transgress against him. In order to avoid incurring the anger of this god, an Abkhaz will not draw water or wash himself when the rainbow is in the sky, and is generally careful about the use of water. Like any other god, *Atswaqwa* may bestow the " warmth of his eyes and his heart ", in return for offerings and prayers. Whoever is affected by his wrath, grows icteritious, emaciated, to save his life he must, at the direction of the sorceresses, make the following offering to the rainbow god :—

On one of the Thursdays [1] the old (" pure ") women take the sick person to the river, pass (Geo. *shemoavleben*) around his head 4–5 yards of variegated chintz, and pray : " The great god ! Acknowledging his transgressions this sick person (the name is mentioned) has appeared before thee, and humbly entreats thee to accept this chintz as a pledge that he will perform the established offering at the proper time, at the direction of the sorceresses ! "

On the following Thursday he is taken again to the same river and place. Usually three women say the prayer, but there may be seven. Men, with the exception of the patient, are not allowed to be present at this ceremony. The sick person is dressed entirely in white. The eldest woman [2] kills a capon and a hen ; women carry out all the duties, preparing *ashwamkyd'*, " *ghomi* " (millet pudding), *akwakwàr*, and *atcha-gvazàl* (Geo. *ghvezeli*, an oblong bread), of each of which there must be seven of the usual, and seven of the very small size. All these are placed on *ashwamkyd'*, on which also burn seven wax candles. The prayer is said by the eldest woman. The patient kneels in front of the offering ; he is taken home immediately the ceremony is over, and he must not look back. The seven small *akwakwàr*, *atcha-gvazàl*, and seven small portions of *ghomi* (*abòst'a*—millet porridge), are thrown into the water ; they represent the share of the female slaves (*ahl'ap'hwòs*) of the rainbow god. Everything else is consumed by the women themselves ; the remains being thrown into the river, for nothing must be taken home.

Muhammadans must also burn candles at this offering. The candles are fixed on a kind of hoop made of grape vine. At the end of the ceremony the hoop with the burning candles is thrown into the river.

It should be noted that in some parts of the country this god is called *Àtswaqwa-òlia* (the Rainbow-Eliah). So at least he was called, according to the testimony of D. I. Gulia, by Javaz, the famous woman supplicant.

[1] Thursday in Megrelian is *tsashkhva*, the day of the sky. It is noteworthy that the Abkhasians perform usually on the day of the sky, the majority of rites that are seemingly connected with the sky, as in the case given.

[2] The Abkhasian women kill animals only on occasions of certain offerings.

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[231] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
[541] beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

● 233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special com-
•[233] partment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the
[252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the
[415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is
352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some
415 of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd
412 is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family
585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

/50 cont./

782 233 [796] On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder- [562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

782 731 789 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre- [533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva rysshva and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also [821] during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second, to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one 782 731 574 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, reminding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

C [756 cont.]
712 laid out similarly, except that they had wickerwork instead of poles. The shepherds built themselves watchtowers, resting on four piles, made of beams eight meters high laid horizontally on top of one another, which likewise were provided with embrasures.

C
726 On their war and raiding expeditions the Cherkess used
342 tents which they had probably borrowed from the neighboring
[177] Tatars. The simpler ones consisted of two inclined poles bound together at the top, over which the felt coverings were hung, and the supporting ropes were made fast in the woods on any convenient root. The better-equipped ones had the beehive shape of the Tatar-Mongol tents (Vol. II, I, Figs. 231, 232); they were [757]

C
342
351
343

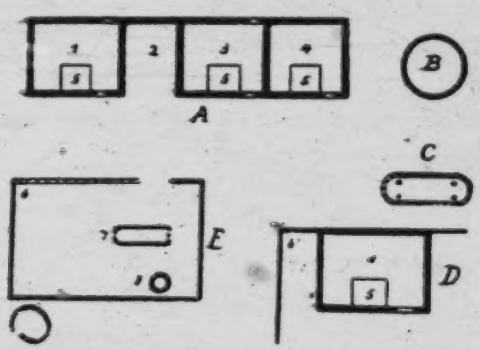


Fig. 448. Ground plan of a Cherkess farmstead in the village Biberd. A Dwelling: 1, 3, and 4, rooms with (5) fireplaces and chimneys of wickerwork, 2 open room; B, small wickerwork stable with thatched roof; C, wickerwork maize-granary on piles; D, house with fireplace (5) and chimney, serving as winter stable, surrounded by a plashed hedge (6); E, fenced-in barnyard with troughs (7 and 8).

C
726 draped on the inside with rush-mats and carpeted with rugs, had
342 a smoke-hole at the top, and probably also had lattice-work
[350] and a stable roof framework like the aforementioned central Asiatic tents.

A
● 233 Domestic economy. Until recently the Abkhaz engaged principally in animal husbandry, although the climate is

A 233 [757 cont.]

unfavorable for it, for example, the cattle are therefore small. The herdsmen wandered with the stock from pasture to pasture, and from time to time built [Fig. 449 appears here] anew their A 241 wickerwork huts (see above, p. 6), which they took along with them. Now agriculture seems to predominate; the major crop is maize, but earlier it was spiked millet or, less often, wheat. Besides these, they also cultivate beans, flax, hemp, cotton,

C 411

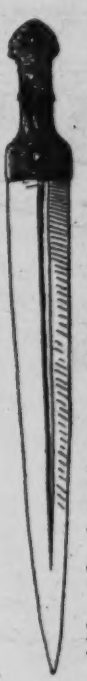


Fig. 449. Cherkess dagger with bone handle, colored green, and silver studs (1/3 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A 241 tobacco (that grown in Sukhumi is known as the best in the Caucasus), rice, climbing cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, many grapes and fruits: apples, pears, plums, figs, chestnuts, A 242 pomegranates, nuts, and others. Berry bushes grow on the slopes in great number, but their fruit is almost never used in the economy, as in Georgia.

C [769 cont.]
796 and lighted with lamps, is set up in the house of an elder of the
S kin group. An animal is sacrificed in honor of the god, and after
[782] the feast the cheese is distributed among the participants as a magical remedy. Other festivals are celebrated: for the new year and for Easter, in March, when one first fasts, then slaughters an offering in the sacred grove, and enjoys himself by shooting at eggs, etc.; at the beginning of the harvest, when roasted unripe wheat with sour milk, and later other kinds of grain and fruit, are eaten as festive dishes; in October when the plants wither, etc.

A The Abkhaz show their reverence for the gods and spirits
796 at given occasions or on certain holidays by the sacrificial offer-
782 ing of animals, milk, bread, and other things, and by prayers, which are often constructed with a wealth of words and are poetically exalted.

Thus, on New Year's Eve they kneel in prayer, sprinkling incense on a coal-pan, around a rectangular cheese-cake (suluguni)--this custom is called Kalinda, cf. the Kolinda of the Rumanians and others--and on New Year's Day the father of the house lays wheat bread with an egg baked in it on everyone's breast, and he directs the "heart-prayer" (gunykhwa) to God, that they may be protected from heart disease. On Christmas Day between the first crow of the cock and daybreak he begs that they be spared from stomach ailments; afterwards everyone eats a chicken and four small pieces of cheese-bread (kwakwari). The celebration of Syošu is also held on New Year's Eve, especially by the smiths. Here the father of the house prays to him for health and protection against harm from their work tools, and he throws into the fire pieces of curd-cake and of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animals: a sheep or calf for the father of the house, a rooster for each member of the family [Familie].

A Before driving the animals into the mountains and after
●233 driving them from there, the herdsmen sacrifice a ram in honor
[782] of the god of lightning (Ap'i, khakhikal = he who lives above,
C called Sible by the Cherkess) and pray that he spare them and
[776] their herds. When an animal is killed by lightning, [770] the
A owner calls out all the villagers; while singing and dancing
[231]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzv16zha

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family, being angry with her masters, took a portion of the dough for *akwakwər* destined for the "god" *Got'anùa*, and placing it in a scoop of bitter-gourd (*akwapey*, Geo. *kopi*), hid it in the loft. As usual the family went to bed after the ceremony. But unfortunately for them the offended *Got'anùa* soundly thrashed all of them, using for the purpose the very same scoop in which had been hidden the dough destined for himself. This *gvari* makes propitiatory offerings at the will of sorcerers to *Got'anùa* twice a year, during the night before Christmas and before the Assumption.

Got'anùa, under the name of *Okhvdmuri*, evidently spread throughout Megrelia during the missionaryship of Lamberti.[1]

V. Deities whose Cults have no Fixed Dates

1. *Et-nòkha—Àga-nòkha*

The sea, like other manifestations of nature, has its own "part of deity", called *Àga-inkhwò* or *àga-intswakhwò*. An Abkhaz makes an offering to this deity when he goes to the sea coast for any considerable time. The sea deity is not to be trifled with; if it is slighted it becomes turbulent, it surges, and punishes the unrespectful. Therefore even the children are forbidden to throw pebbles, or to spit into the sea. The worship of this deity has been preserved in its purest form among the Bzib Abkhasians, namely among the peasantry of the Gudout (Gudaut) district, of the *gvari* of Amp'aràa. It has been described by A. Tch(ukbar), in *Sotrudnik Zakavkazskoy Missii* ("The Collabarator of the Transcaucasian Mission"), 1912, p. 373 sqq., where the deity *Et-nòkh-Àga-nòkha* is called *Et-nykh Ag-Nykh*. *Àga* denotes sea, *(a)nòkh*—"icon." But what does the word *Et* denote?[2]

2. *Àshkha-intswakhwò* (god of mountains)

Mountains also have "their part of God" known under the name of *Àshkha-intswakhwò*. *Àshkha* denotes mountain; *intswakhwò*, "his (of the male rational being) part of God." I have pointed out above that the Abkhaz often uses the word *nòkha* in the sense of god, which in the Christian faith is understood, or more correctly, translated, as icon. The god of mountains "governs" all the mountains and the beasts inhabiting them. Abkhaz shepherds make offerings to this god twice a year, in the spring when they drive the cattle to the mountains, and in the autumn when they drive them back. To him are subject also mountain game. In order to preserve the game from

[1] A. Lamberti, op. cit., pp. 148-9.

[2] This word manifests a consonance with the Assyro-Babylonian name of the god of the sea, *Ea*. Is this a mere coincidence?

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[28] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[031] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
[541] beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/46 cont./

[782 23] pronounces a prayer the second time, cutting off pieces from different parts of the animal and offering them to Aithar by throwing them on the red-hot coals.

11.

Azhvephshaa (Abn-intsvakhu)

[782 224 [776] [796] Azhvephshaa is the god of the forests and wild animals. Hunters sacrifice to him before setting out on a hunt, usually the middle or at the end of December. For the sacrifice, they jointly buy a ram or a goat. When it is roasted, the oldest huntsman prays to Azhvephshaa to send success for their undertaking; at the conclusion of the prayers, he throws small pieces of roasted meat and a piece of incense on the coals. Each of the remaining hunters repeats the prayer in turn, adding his own wishes and indicating the particular animal he would like to kill, while throwing pieces of incense on the coals.

12.

Dzhadzha and Anaphanga

[782 24 [776] [796] Dzhadzha is the patroness of the crops. Prayers to her are offered twice a year: in March, at the beginning of spring, and in November, after the maize has been stored. Praying to Dzhadzha is not accompanied by any special solemnity; it is performed quietly by each individual family. Rich landowners sometimes invite their former dependents to the prayer, particularly those who have taken part in the sowing and reaping of their crops. On the day set aside for prayer, dishes made exclusively of grain and fruits grown by the master of the house are prepared. After the food has been placed on the table, the oldest member of the family /47/ addresses a prayer to Dzhadzha, thanking him for the good harvest or begging him to send everything in abundance. For the spring prayer to Dzhadzha, all the dishes prepared are lenten.

/47 cont./

782
241
[776]

The Abkhaz asks of Anaphanga, the goddess of crops: "Wherever I draw my furrow and strike with iron and with implement, may an abundance of grain be granted me; grant happiness to the sower and to the consumer." During reaping, when the sheaves are first brought home, the Abkhaz prays in honor of Anaphanga; during the fast of Assumption, however, a cross is made of the ears; kernels of maize and beans are fastened to a candle to avert possible harm by evil spirits, e.g., by Dzhadzha herself. This

[776]

Dzhadzha is an ugly goddess, short and fat; when she comes into a field she exclaims, "Natsvis, natsvis" (little finger! little finger!), i.e., the wish that the maize in that field grow no higher than a little finger, but if one pursues Dzhadzha with the words, "Raki dzaki, raki dzaki" ("cubit-span, cubit-span"), she leaves the field and her wish does not come true.

[243]

Before the threshing of the gomi /millet/ the Abkhaz pray to the great goddesses to keep the whole family in good health and to permit the whole household in future, and at the head the lady of the house herself, to gather at the beater for the threshing of the gomi (satsekhveli).

13.

A Prayer for the Bees

782
231

The Abkhaz bake a round loaf of bread with cheese, take it to the bee-garden, and pray to Ananagunda for the preservation of their bees; upon returning home, they break the loaf and eat it without looking at one another, for which some stand facing one door, some another.

14.

Prayer to the Sun and the Moon

782
821

The Abkhaz addresses the sun with the following prayer: "Sunlight, withhold not your benevolence from us, warmth

A [757 cont.]
233 unfavorable for it, for example, the cattle are therefore small. The herdsmen wandered with the stock from pasture to pasture, and from time to time built [Fig. 449 appears here] anew their
A wickerwork huts (see above, p. 6), which they took along with
●241 them. Now agriculture seems to predominate; the major crop is maize, but earlier it was spiked millet or, less often, wheat. Besides these, they also cultivate beans, flax, hemp, cotton,

C
411

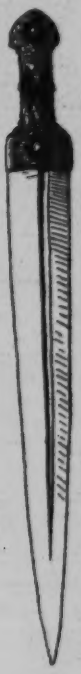


Fig. 449. Cherkess dagger with bone handle, colored green, and silver studs (1/3 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A
241 tobacco (that grown in Sukhumi is known as the best in the Caucasus), rice, climbing cucumbers, pumpkins, melons, many grapes and fruits: apples, pears, plums, figs, chestnuts,
A pomegranates, nuts, and others. Berry bushes grow on the slopes
242 in great number, but their fruit is almost never used in the economy, as in Georgia.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZha

small salt *akwakwàr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Làmilakà* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Làmilakà* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwàr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyəbir* (in Geo. *rikap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abala*.

[1] *Anasp'a dzw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dzadsola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-satskhele*. The word *a-bala*, in Abkhasian *a-mərtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik tsdlii*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *The Gathering of Medicinal Herbs*

On Maundy Thursday, young maidens, led by old women, go into a forest early before the dawn, to gather medicinal herbs. They must neither converse nor look back. When they dig out the herb, they throw salt into the soil, murmuring "*Àdgilə-dedop'al, bəkhwə bdl'eyt*, the Queen-Earth, we have returned to thee thy share". The following herbs are considered as particularly healing: (*a*) *ajmshyə-rshwəga*, *Arum albispatum*,[1] literally denoting: *ajmshyə*, eyebrow; *ashwəga*, "that with which they paint (a paint)"; it is used against diphtheria and scarlet fever; (*b*) *aztqyil* or *abgar ləmha*, *Aristolochia pontica*[1] (birthwort); the second Abkhasian term denotes, literally, "jackal's ear," used against erysipelas (St. Anthony's fire); and (*c*) *ajaqwa*, veratrum, according to Tchubinov (Geo. *Kharis-dzira*). Having finished gathering, they return home in silence and without looking back.

Maundy Thursday is called by the Abkhasians *tchatchkhadəl*, derived, in all probability, from the Megrelian *tsashkha didi*, "the great Thursday."

5. *Jaja*[2]

On Maundy Thursday the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the goddess of fruitfulness (of husbandry and horticulture) called *Jaja*. For this occasion the Abkhasian women prepare all sorts of lenten dishes, taking care always to include a pumpkin. The dishes are placed outside the house, in a corn-field, the offering to *Jaja* being accompanied by a supplication as follows: "The great *Jaja*! We have done all that was required of us, and have made the customary offering. We therefore humbly entreat thee to show thy bounty towards us and grant us a good harvest in the field and in the kitchen garden!" As I have stated before, the Abkhasians have no set prayer formulas, and each prays as best he can.

As always, the offering is left for a few minutes wherever it was placed, and the supplicants stand before it, and watch with emotion how the spirit of the goddess invisibly satiates herself with the gifts of men! Needless to say they themselves consume the "remains".

As I have already remarked, there are two Abkhasian gods of fruitfulness: the god *Anàp'a-nàga* and the goddess *Jaja*.[3] *Jàja*, as imagined by an Abkhaz, is a broad-shouldered woman, of small stature. More than once Abkhasians have seen her wandering about the fields

[1] According to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden.

[2] It is of interest to elucidate what relation *Jaja* holds to Georgian *jojoba*; see I. Javakhishvili, *A History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian), p. 138.

[3] The relation of these two gods is difficult to determine; nor do we know the relation of *Jaja* to *Ayt'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

belonging to those who have failed to propitiate her, and muttering: 776
"Corncobs (of Indian corn) of a digit size, corncobs of a digit size!" 241
But if the owner of the field succeeds in frightening her and making her say *ràki, dzakì, ràki dzakì*, "of a cubit size," he will have a magnificent harvest.

On the day of *tchatchkhadəl*, after the offering has been made to *Jaja*, the seeds are taken for the first time into the kitchen garden.

6. *Àmshap'*

Easter Day is celebrated with great solemnity by all the 796
Abkhasians. It must be noted that the Abkhasians to-day have no notion whatever of the Christian conception of this day. Even the greeting, "Christ is risen," usual on this day, is wanting in the Abkhasian language. Everyone able to afford it has a new dress made for this day. To emphasize the poverty of a person the Abkhaz says, "Even for *Àmshap'* he could not get himself new clothes." This is almost the only day when an Abkhaz considers it necessary to send to church at least one of the members of his family. And the service in the church begins early enough to enable it to be finished by sun- [782]
rise. Everyone is in haste to be the first to light a wax candle and to [769]
place a painted egg on the graves of their dead. The Muhammadan Abkhasians also follow this custom, although they do not light the candles. It is known that Abkhasians bury their dead near their [764]
homes, in the places favoured by the deceased, and the graves, therefore, are scattered about the village. Owing to this custom the whole village is illuminated on this day of *Àmshap'*.

On this day each family must slaughter some animal. And those [782]
of the Abkhasians who follow the established custom of Paschal offerings, immolate two or three animals according to what his obligation is, what he "owes"—this word denotes "obliged", "must", "owes".

(*a*) *Antswakhwə* (or *Antswahwa*).

This is a compound word, consisting of *Antswà*, God, and (*a*)-*khwə*, part, share, and denoting "share of God", "for God", more exactly "to render to God that which is due to Him", briefly "praying to God". On this day most of the Abkhasians reverently offer up their prayers to God; but not all of them. There are families who are "not obliged" to render to God "His share". I have already mentioned 776
that the Abkhasian makes offerings only to those gods under whose power his parents or he himself had come, and thus had become his tributary, so to speak. Very often separate members of a family have, in addition to the general family guardian-gods, their own personal

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[231] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[341] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/47 cont./

782 241 [776] The Abkhaz asks of Anaphanga, the goddess of crops: "Wherever I draw my furrow and strike with iron and with implement, may an abundance of grain be granted me; grant happiness to the sower and to the consumer." During reaping, when the sheaves are first brought home, the Abkhaz prays in honor of Anaphanga; during the fast of Assumption, however, a cross is made of the ears; kernels of maize and beans are fastened to a candle to avert possible harm by evil spirits, e.g., by Dzhadzha herself. This [776] Dzhadzha is an ugly goddess, short and fat; when she comes into a field she exclaims, "Natsvis, natsvis" (little finger! little finger!), i.e., the wish that the maize in that field grow no higher than a little finger, but if one pursues Dzhadzha with the words, "Raki dzaki, raki dzaki" ("cubit-span, cubit-span"), she leaves the field and her wish does not come true.

• [243] Before the threshing of the gomi /millet/ the Abkhaz pray to the great goddesses to keep the whole family in good health and to permit the whole household in future, and at the head the lady of the house herself, to gather at the beater for the threshing of the gomi (satsekhveli).

13.

A Prayer for the Bees

782 231 The Abkhaz bake a round loaf of bread with cheese, take it to the bee-garden, and pray to Ananagunda for the preservation of their bees; upon returning home, they break the loaf and eat it without looking at one another, for which some stand facing one door, some another.

14.

Prayer to the Sun and the Moon

782 821 The Abkhaz addresses the sun with the following prayer: "Sunlight, withhold not your benevolence from us, warmth

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaħwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the [462] fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [784] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsàsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ħwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [352] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nə̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə* [539] *—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number 776 seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head 801 of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaħwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[193] [2] *ħwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[821] [3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [171] included in both pleiades.

A [754 cont.]
340 for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in
[354] the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney
tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide
A 350 bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on
which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whet-
A 412 stone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing
415 millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and
490 horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons
353 hang on the walls.

A 342 Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

A [755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed
351 hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork,
343 plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press,
A barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are
285 round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15
● 295 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

C 361 The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is
C 349 built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the
C 352 Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an out-
354 side wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

[See Top of This Page--Analyst]

23: Shabad N-4 (no date) 1951 R1 Soviet Union R1
Abchas R13

ABKHAZ AUTONOMOUS SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC
Capital, Sukhumi; area, 3,300, population, 330,000

The Abkhaz Autonomous SSR or Abkhasia (Russian *Abkhaziya*) occupies the extreme northwestern portion of the Georgian SSR, on the southwestern slope of the Greater Caucasus, oriented toward the Black Sea. Nearly the entire population, including, in addition to the basic Abkhaz national group, Georgians, Russians, Armenians, and Greeks, is established in a narrow littoral zone between the town of Gagra and the Ingur (or Enguri) River, which forms the southeastern border of the republic. The mountain slopes are largely forested. The humid subtropical climate of the lowland makes possible the cultivation of such important crops as citrus fruits (tangerines, lemons, oranges, and grapefruit), tea, tung-wood, geranium, and other subtropical plants. The principal staple crops are corn and a high-quality tobacco, which is partly exported abroad and makes the Abkhaz Autonomous SSR one of the major tobacco-growing areas of the USSR. Lumbering is important in the forested area, and there is a large paper mill on the Ingur River. Other important power resources are the excellent coking coal of Tkvarcheli and the many mountain streams which furnish hydroelectric energy. The industry consists chiefly of sawmilling, woodworking, wine making, tobacco processing, and fruit canning and its centers are the capital, Sukhumi, Gudauta, Ochamchire, and Gagra. The Black Sea littoral is a popular climatic resort area, having numerous tourist resorts and sanatoria. The principal transportation routes are the Black Sea shore railroad, which was completed during the Second World War, and the Sukhumi military road, which leads across the Greater Caucasus at Klukhori Pass and has its terminus at Sukhumi, on the Black Sea coast.

Sukhumi, which was formerly called Sukhum, is one of the most important subtropical health resorts of the USSR. It is the center of the tobacco-growing area and has tobacco factories, distilleries, metalworks, and food-processing plants. There are tropical botanical gardens and a research institute devoted to subtropical agriculture. Near by on the Gumista River is a hydroelectric station completed after the Second World War.

Gali is an agricultural processing center in a tea and citrus-fruit district.

Tkvarcheli, which developed in the 1930's, has overtaken the older

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special com-
[233] partment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the
[252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the
[415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is
352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some
415 of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd
412 is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family
585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. ÀYT'AR-NƏ̀HWA*

1. *Jabrán*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nə̀hwa*, which is derived from *a-nə̀hwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabrán*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashə̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat) [2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswə̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəsa*, a combination of *adswə̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *àrsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'hwəs-tsk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "h" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "hw" represents a labialized variety of "h". [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† The combination "dsw" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "ds". For this latter sound see p. 329 (ts'). [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] N. Y. MARR, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskii Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.
(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashə̀* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwədù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *àämen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megrelianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread is baked in rhododendron (*à-k'wazhwə*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

* The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*k'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*hy*", "*wy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotizes the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*k'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*k'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

[1] In Abkhasian *àtshyashwə*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *ant'ari*) *tsh'obas*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsh'ya*), good (*à-bza*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *boslobe* (an abstract form of *bosli*, cowhouse) or *ilorobe*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ilori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhini-Ant'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

guardians, whose power extends to his descendants, but not to those of his brothers or sisters. In the village of Adzvibzha almost everyone is obliged to carry out this " praying to God ", Christians as well as Muhammadans.

Every Abkhaz keeps in his cellar, in honour of " God ", a special pitcher filled with must of the very best grade. However great his need, an Abkhaz will not, for any consideration in the world, open this " sacrificial " pitcher until the celebration of the cult of " praying to God ".[1] Early in the morning, on returning from the church, the head of the family surrounded by the male members of his household, sacrifices a young he-goat over the " sacrificial " pitcher, and entreats " the great God to receive graciously the humble offering made by him in accordance with the instructions of his forefathers . . ." He humbly entreats the Great God " punish us not for our faults and trespasses ", etc. After this the meat of the immolated goat is boiled, and sacrificial wheat-cakes are baked. All this is taken down into the cellar, and placed in front of the sacrificial pitcher. The members of the family kneel down, while the head of the family reverently cleans and opens the pitcher, and, holding in his left hand a hazel stick upon which the heart and liver of the goat are transfixed, he prays *Antwsa-du* (to great God) that He grant him and his family a long and happy life. In his prayer he never fails to mention that they are performing the rite " in the manner they were taught by their fathers and grandfathers ". Afterwards he fills a glass with wine from the pitcher and pours it on the heart and liver and the sacrificial cakes; he then passes the latter, with the wine, three times over the heads of the supplicants who are kneeling down, and says: " Grant us the warmth of Thine eyes and of Thine heart! Protect us from all infirmities and sickness." Then follows again the libation of wine Now they all rise, turn round from right to left, and each places a piece of frankincense on burning coals. For a few minutes they all stand still humbly, while the great God " receives " their offerings, and then, with strict observation of order of seniority, a glass of wine and a small piece of the heart and liver is given to each of the participants. It should be noted that only the household members are allowed to partake of these sacrificial offerings. Even the married daughters of the family are treated as strangers, and they are not allowed to share in the offerings with their husbands and children. It is sinful even to think of the sale of the wine. In most of the families the female sex is generally forbidden to partake of this offering.

Thus do the Abkhasians perform annually the domestic offering to God of " His share ". But every three to five years each Abkhaz

[1] The same applies to other " sacrificial pitchers " referred to below.

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[914] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
433 cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[031] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
[541] beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
233 their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
[556] what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
● [262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
4 [178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/17 cont./

342 newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one
[585] small house.

The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese,
262 corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten,
[263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all re-
[888] ligious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all
[593] family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are
428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided
[592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [795] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes marula (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pistol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both [302] sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [260] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few

/29 cont./

765 rams, and, in general, whatever they can afford; furthermore
[262] they bring various sweetmeats prepared with butter and with honey, and also matsoni (sour /30/ milk), etc. One person in the procession holds in his hand a branching, tree-like candle, to which is fastened a strip of calico, green in color and soaked in wax. At the ends of the larger and smaller branches similar strips are hung, which are stirred by the wind like the leaves of a tree. (If the procession takes place at night, a few lighted candles are fastened to the branching candle as well as to the horns of bulls). Slowly the sad procession approaches the house and enters the yard, where it is met by the others. Here there is wailing and lamentation by the men and women separately.
[782] After this the bulls and rams are killed, each with the words, "It is offered to your soul."

The next day, i.e., on the day of the aphskhuvra, a great number of people gather. By noon one of the relatives of the deceased unties his horse and stands in the middle of a meadow, while the men and women form a circle around him. Then the horse is led around the circle three times, with the deceased's next of kin following behind, barefoot, bare-headed, in mourning attire, and weeping bitterly. The men beat their breasts and faces. The women stand in a circle divided into two groups alternately crying "avav." This ceremony ends with the horse being led out of the circle. From this time on, all earthly signs (remains) of the deceased are considered to have been destroyed; up to this time the deceased has been considered to be invisibly present in the gathering.

After this the guests seat themselves at a dinner. On the meadow, under the open sky, a long tablecloth has been spread out for them and various dishes have been prepared. Particularly
[262] noteworthy are spoons, cups, glasses, thimbles, etc. made out of cheese. The candles described above are placed there, too.

It must be noted that even though this banquet involves great expense, it is not burdensome to the hosts, since the expenses are shared, not only by the relatives, but also by the whole village where such a funeral repast is held.

/44 cont./

7.

782
585
[776] The Prayer Ceremony in Honor of Azhahara

The Abkhaz call the protector or genius of the house and hearth by the name Azhahara in whose honor is performed the ceremony for a young married couple in the stage of their marriage before they have appeared together before their elders and the young woman is for the first time led into her husband's main house, or when the bride is invited into her father's house. One of the oldest members of the family sticks pieces of the heart and liver of a sacrificial animal on a spit and begs Azhahara to protect the young couple at home and out of doors.

8.

Alishkantra

782
231
[776] Alishkantra is the "mistress" of dogs. In the opinion of the Abkhaz, the owner of good dogs will also be fortunate in the multiplication of his cattle; good fortune in dogs is associated with good fortune in all domestic animals. Therefore before praying to other god-protectors of domestic and wild animals, the Abkhaz prays to Alishkantra to grant him luck with good dogs and the opportunity to raise and breed them.

9.

/45/ A Prayer in Honor of Zhabran

[776] Zhabran is the protector of animals. Every Abkhaz
[796 owning cattle performs the prayer-ceremony in his honor
262] on "Cheese Saturday." For this they prepare suluguni (a big cheese) called "sacred cheese"; bread dough is placed on the hearth, in which a man puts a core of suluguni, whereupon he prays, "Prefer me to all those pronouncing your name;

/56 cont./

579 782 all this is hung on trees near the place where Eyrig-aatsnykh is believed to have his permanent abode.

22.

Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh

776 Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh is worshiped as the mightiest [778] of the gods. Mt. Dudryuphsh is regarded as his abode. Those who dare to climb this mountain are immediately punished with blindness; therefore prayers and sacrifices to this deity are offered at the foot of the mountain. As a deity, Anybs-nykha has no exclusive, professional field of authority, but he is worshiped as higher and mightier than all the other gods. [782] The arrangement of prayers and sacrifices to him is the same as to Sha-sha, with the difference that when an oath is taken in his name, the formula is "May Anybs-nykha send me blindness and every ailment . . . ., "etc.

778 Anybs-nykha's residence is under the exclusive supervision of the large Abkhaz family Ankhaë-Chichba. The [823] Chichba have enjoyed this right for several generations; it is a source of great profit to them, since permission to bring sacrifices to this deity must be bought from them with presents. Not far from the top of Mt. Dudryuphsh, the actual abode of Anybs-nykha, a stone lies under an oak; on this stone the image of the Holy Virgin has been carved. All those who [782] take an oath must put a coin or something metal under this stone, and woe to him who is tempted to take anything away, even one little thing, from among the objects lying there!

23.

/57/ Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

782 [796] On Christmas Eve in every family chickens are killed [962] and four kvakvari (small loaves of bread stuffed with cheese)

/57 cont./

[782] [796] [262] are made for each member of the family. The chickens must be fried and the kvakvari baked before cockcrow. Just after the first cockcrow the master of the house puts bowls on the table, into each of which he puts a chicken and four kvakvari; to each one he fastens a wax candle. A brazier with coals is placed near the table. All the members of the family kneel down around the table, each opposite his bowl, [789] and the eldest person in the family, after removing his cap and throwing incense in the brazier, asks God to preserve him and his family from stomach disorders. After the prayer, all rise, turn to the right, and bow to the east; then everyone eats his portion, and each does his best to finish the meal without fail before dawn.

[796] [262] On New Year's Eve, after supper, a prayer is again offered in each family to ask for all sorts of blessings. For this occasion a rectangular pie is prepared, stuffed with cheese; this is put on a board to which a wax candle is fastened. The whole family kneels around it, and the eldest in the clan throws incense on the coals and says the prayer; then the pie is eaten and the leftovers burned on the coals. This prayer is called Kalinda. On the first day of the New Year the prayer called Günykhva (prayer of the heart) is [262] offered. For this, a small loaf of wheat-bread stuffed with an egg is prepared for each member of the family. The head of [789] the family raises a loaf to the breast of each member, praying to God to preserve them from heart ailments. After the prayer, each one eats his loaf.

24.

Drought

731 789 During a severe summer drought all the village girls gather in their best attire near the river. They divide themselves into three groups and make a raft of branches, cover this with straw, and make a doll, which they then dress up as a /58/ woman. When all these preparations are finished, a

A 267 [760] Food. The daily dishes of the Abkhaz are cornmeal mush (abysta), which is eaten with strips of cheese instead of a spoon, sour milk, and millet prepared with cheese (aëladž) or with milk and cheese (atsamukhkua). In the winter they often eat meat, A [263] especially goat. As everywhere, red pepper, garlic, and bitter herbs serve as seasonings. The women cook cone-shaped breads (arvasa) in milk for festive days and in water during fasts.

B 267 Like the Abkhaz, the Cherkess like to eat raw cucumbers with butter, salt, and red pepper, cooked young pumpkins, carrots, wild asparagus, dandelions, and other vegetables; also much rice and thick, stiff mush (pasta) made of wheat grains cooked without salt; formerly it was more often made of unhulled millet (pasta) or hulled millet (hatlama). Flat cakes (medžaga) of ground millet were also baked. Mutton and beef is often eaten with a gravy of sour milk and grated garlic (tusluk) or of honey and butter (fau'tgo). Sour milk (škau), curds, and cheese fill out the daily fare. Festive dishes are: spelt noodles with diced, hardboiled eggs, curds, sour milk, some butter, onions, and garlic (khinkal); flat cakes of wheat flour, eggs, and milk, simmered in butter (širaldama); small cakes of the same dough filled with curds and onions or with honey (haliva), dried apples, apricots cooked in wine and honey, and other fruits, etc.

A C 272 273 Festive drinks are: whisky (arka, fada fitsa = black F.), mead (fada pliš = red F.), millet beer (fada khuš = white F.), honey water (fau'uš), cooked cider with added honey, raisins, and blackberry juice, beer (šür), light and heavy wines from wild and cultivated grapes.

A 594 Society and family. As among other mountain peoples (see p. 732 [untranslated]), so also among the Abkhaz the father (awn aihab) and the mother (awn aihab ap's) of the house manage A 597 the affairs of the kin group [Sippe] and perform the cult ceremonies. They have a peculiar custom: an adult can be adopted by another kin group as though he were a child if he has kissed the mother of the house on the breast three times.

C 565 Up to 1866 the same positions existed among the Cherkess as among the Osset: princes (pši), noblemen (work), who were followers of the former in battle, those freed by the princes

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVi6Zh9

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. ÀYT'AR-NƏ̀ħWA*

1. *Jabràn*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nə̀ħwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nə̀ħwa*, which is derived from *a-nə̀ħwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nəħwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabràn*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashə̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswə̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəsa*, a combination of *adswə̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *àrsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'ħwəs-tsk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "ħ" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "ħw" represents a labialized variety of "ħ". [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† The combination "dsw" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "ds". For this latter sound see p. 329 (ts'). [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianski Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.

(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashə̀* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwodù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *dămen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megrelianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread is baked in rhododendron (*d-k'wazhwe*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

* The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*k'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*ky*", "*qy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotizes the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*k'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*k'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

In Abkhasian *dtshyazhwe*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *sad'ari*) *tsh'obe*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsh'ya*), good (*d-be*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *boslobe* (an abstract form of *bosli*, cowhouse) or *ilorobe*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ilori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhini-Ant'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhaz RI3
Adzvibzha

Àyt'ar!" etc. The dough is kneaded from the same leaven, only when calling to the cows they exclaim *wootsw*. Shrove Saturday is dedicated to *zhwabrdn*.

3. *Anəkha-nəĥwa* (*Dopu-nəkha*)

Near Adzvibzha is a little village called Dopukət, where dwell the Dopua-s who are attendants (Geo. *me-khat-ur-s*) of the "icon"—*Dopu-nəkha*, revered by all the Adzvibzhaans and Dopukətans. This "icon" is known also as *shwəjən-nəkha*, i.e. Sujuna icon, under which is meant, no doubt, St. George of Sujuna in Megrelia. This "icon" is called *zhwardk'yə* by the wives of the Dpua-s, for the reason that the wives of Abkhasians have no right to call by name the eldest members of their husband's *gvari*, or his relations. D. I. Gulia thinks that the word *zhwarak'yə* is the same as the Georgian *zvaraki*, meaning sacrificial animal (the ancient Georgian *zuaraki* = *zowaraki*, Armenian *zowarak*).[1] In honour of this "icon" every Adzvibzhaan and Dopukətan family bakes, on the Shrove Sunday, a cake from millet flour (*sorghum*, in Geo. *ghomi*), which is offered as a gift to it. Prayers are said by the head of each family, and a handful of salt and a piece of wax candle are put aside for the "icon". The eldest of the Dopua goes round the houses and collects the salt and wax.

Mamsər Dopua told us: "At the present time our icon is in the village Sujuna."

4. *Àyt'ar-nəĥwa* (*khwazhwə-kərd*, in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərd*)

On the first Monday[2] of the Great Fast the ritual of supplication to Àyt'ar himself is observed. This supplication is otherwise called *khwazhwə-kərd* (in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərd*). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) is a special cake, sometimes coniform, and sometimes of round flattened shape. These cakes, which may be stuffed with cheese or not, but on this occasion are lenten, are invariably included in sacrificial offerings of the Abkhasians. They may be boiled, as on this occasion, or baked. *A-kərd* denotes "to hold". After it is called, in Abkhasian, the month of February, *khwazhwəkən-mzd* (*a-mza*, month, moon). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) denotes also rhododendron, the leaves of which are indispensable in the making of sacrificial maize-cakes.

[1] As a cult term this word is met with in the form ... in Sabaean (Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, ii, 24, 37, cf. p. 191, n. 179), see N. Marr, *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhasians and Alans*, etc. (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Pb., 1908, vol. xvi, p. 203. (Ed. *Christ. Vost.*)

[2] The Megrelians call this Monday *t'at'ashkha beduieri*, lucky, or happy Monday, lit. the moon-day. With the Abkhasians, too, *Ayt'ar's* day is Monday; they pray to the moon exclusively on Mondays.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

1796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alòshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[240] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[159] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[716] In the opinion of the commission, *Alòshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[231] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight." [1]

[807] The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri, vàri, khəzò, jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*vàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khəzò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

1716 (*d*) *Àmza-nəkwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
1796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

[104] * See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the production of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ɔ" (the ancient Arabic '*ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[171] [1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Ara* (cf. *Alòshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Ara* or *Arsès*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha.

agreed. During the night God caused the earth to be covered with luxuriant vegetation. Captivated by the beauty of vegetation the devil suggested to God that the best way to divide the world between them would be for one to have the earth and the other the vegetation. God took as his share the earth, and the devil received the vegetation. God then ordered him to remove his vegetation immediately. Only now did the devil realize his mistake, which, however, he rectified thus: he restored the vegetation to God, and in return for it he begged and obtained from Him the right to the souls of those who fall from the trees, having climbed them without first praying to God for their safety. . . ."

(*b*) *Barbanjia* (*dchiakakona*)

Before sunset on the 14th August the Abkhasian youths light, in their respective courtyards, a fire of flax straw (at present, owing to the lack of this straw, they use dry fern, etc.). Each person leaps thrice through the flame of this fire, shouting " I have burnt the evil spirit; I have burnt the evil spirit ". By so leaping through the flame an Abkhaz " purifies " himself of the evil spirit. After they have leapt three times through the flame each throws a piece of salt into the burning fire, and then, altogether, they begin to beat the fire with sticks to extinguish it, at the same time shouting the above quoted words. At the conclusion of the whole operation, the neighbours inform each other of their victory over the evil spirit by firing a gun. This manner of destroying the evil spirits is called " the burning of the demon " or *Barbanjia*. The denotation of the word is incomprehensible to me.[1]

(*c*) *Nȧn-ḫwa*

On the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, the " pure " (eldest) woman in the family prepares *a-tcha* (" a round bread stuffed with cheese "), boils a cock, and leads the whole family into the kitchen garden. Here they all kneel in front of the blossoming cucumber vine, and the eldest woman makes offering to Nan, saying: " the great Nan (*Nȧn-du*)! We who offer thee this sacrifice, established by our ancestors, humbly entreat thee to have mercy upon our house: increase it like the stars in the sky! " etc. The kneeling family repeat with her, *Ȧmen*. But no one knows who *Nan* (*Anan*) is; they only know that she is a goddess of procreation of the human race. Of the Mother of God there is no knowledge whatever.

[1] The Georgian equivalent is *Dchiakakona*, which is observed on Ash-Wednesday. *Dchiakakona*, according to Tchubinov, denotes " the leaping through the fire on Wednesday of Passion-week ".

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Aázvibzha

Thus, the goddess
of the bees as a sign of her good disposition towards a given family placed an egg (the egg of *Anàna-gùnda*) in one of the hives. No matter how much honey they took from that hive, there would always be a plentiful supply of it.[1]

IV. K'IRSA

Christmas is one of the four chief holidays[2] of the year. Abkhasians call it *K'irsa* (Megr. *K'irse*), which denotes Christ. An Abkhaz considers it a great disgrace if he fails on this day to kill a goat or some other animal. On this day "the table is laid" also for the souls of ancestors.

(a) *Agwə-nə̀hwa*

For some families it is obligatory to make an offering early in the morning on this day to *Agwə-nə̀hwa*, for which *akwakwdr* are baked. The supplicant entreats that *Agwə-nə̀hwa* grant them the warmth of his eyes and his heart. In translation the word denotes, "praying to heart." This "praying" is also known to the Gurians, under the name of "praying for the womb" (Geo. *Mutslis salotsavi*); Megrelians call it *Khatsitsi*.[3] According to I. Kipshidze, it is the New Year's Day breakfast.[4] In my opinion it is nothing more than a survival of the supplication described below.

(b) *Got'anùa* (*sharp'ə-nə̀hwa*)

Some *gvari*-s have preserved to this day the following custom. On Christmas Eve, the family go to bed very early; they rise, however, at midnight, and begin praying. Enough chickens are killed to provide one for every member of the family (blackbirds also may be used), or in their place a young goat; *akwakwdr* baked. All this is offered to *Got'anùa*; the food is consumed immediately after the prayer is ended, and the remains, if any, are not left but burnt without fail. All return to bed. The dawn must find them asleep. In Megrelian *got'ànua* denotes morning-twilight, dawn, to grow light, to dawn, the Abkhasian equivalent of which is *sharp'-nə̀hwa*, the morning prayer; the Megrelian term, however, is more in use.

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family,

[1] *Anàna*, in my opinion, is derived from *an*, mother; *gùnda*, probably from *gundi*, a swarm, a collection of something.

[2] Namely, the New Year, Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas.

[3] *Khatsitsi—khatsetsi* is called also a bride. (Cf. I. Kipshidze, *Gram. of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. *khat'ets'i*.) (Ed. *Khrist. Vostok*.)

[4] *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. (where is also a reference to the explanation of the same word in Georgian by V. Beridze, *Sitqvishone*, s.v., Ed. *Kh. V.*).

/17 cont./

342 [585] newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one small house.

262 The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten, [263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

[888] The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all religious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all family rites. [593] Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are 428 [592] given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

A 267 [760] Food. The daily dishes of the Abkhaz are cornmeal mush (abysta), which is eaten with strips of cheese instead of a spoon, sour milk, and millet prepared with cheese (aëladž) or with milk and cheese (atsamukhkua). In the winter they often eat meat, A [263] especially goat. As everywhere, red pepper, garlic, and bitter herbs serve as seasonings. The women cook cone-shaped breads (arvasa) in milk for festive days and in water during fasts.

E 269 Like the Abkhaz, the Cherkess like to eat raw cucumbers with butter, salt, and red pepper, cooked young pumpkins, carrots, wild asparagus, dandelions, and other vegetables; also much rice and thick, stiff mush (pasta) made of wheat grains cooked without salt; formerly it was more often made of unhulled millet (pasta) or hulled millet (hatlama). Flat cakes (medžaga) of ground millet were also baked. Mutton and beef is often eaten with a gravy of sour milk and grated garlic (tusluk) or of honey and butter (fauʾtgo). Sour milk (škau), curds, and cheese fill out the daily fare. Festive dishes are: spelt noodles with diced, hardboiled eggs, curds, sour milk, some butter, onions, and garlic (khinkal); flat cakes of wheat flour, eggs, and milk, simmered in butter (širaldama); small cakes of the same dough filled with curds and onions or with honey (haliva), dried apples, apricots cooked in wine and honey, and other fruits, etc.

E 272 Festive drinks are: whisky (arka, fada fitsa = black F.), 273 mead (fada pliš = red F.), millet beer (fada khuš = white F.), honey water (fauʾuš), cooked cider with added honey, raisins, and blackberry juice, beer (šür), light and heavy wines from wild and cultivated grapes.

A 594 Society and family. As among other mountain peoples (see p. 732 [untranslated]), so also among the Abkhaz the father (awn aihab) and the mother (awn aihab apʾs) of the house manage A 597 the affairs of the kin group [Sippe] and perform the cult ceremonies. They have a peculiar custom: an adult can be adopted by another kin group as though he were a child if he has kissed the mother of the house on the breast three times.

C 565 Up to 1866 the same positions existed among the Cherkess as among the Osset: princes (pši), noblemen (work), who were followers of the former in battle; those freed by the princes

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaħwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the [462] fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [784] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsàsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ħwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [352] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nə̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə* [539] *—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number 776 801 seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaħwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[193] [2] *ħwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[821] [3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *Au*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [171] included in both pleiades.

/13 cont./

574 road in the evening, he immediately greets him, "bziala vahbeit" -- "it is good to see you!" Then he invites the traveler into his house; "Come in and rest, where are you going now? Spend the night in our house, and early in the morning go your way." If the traveler, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, accepts the invitation and puts up at the host's house, he receives a warm reception and is wonderfully well regaled. And if the traveler does not accept the invitation, he replies, "ubeikht" (grow rich, thank you) and continues on his way. The custom of hospitality protects the traveler even from blood-vengeance. Once he is someone's guest, no one has the right to touch him.

181 888 Along with his hospitality and generosity, the Abkhaz is also courteous, polite, and respectful, especially to older persons. Here are a few examples.

515 576 [264] Before taking any food the Abkhaz usually wash their hands. But the washing is performed in order of seniority, the ablution of the hands beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest of those attending the banquet. The same order is observed in drinking wine. But on such occasions the oldest person does not lag behind either. In the beginning he renounces his right of priority and invites the person next in rank to drink wine or to wash his hands first. This is required by the custom of courtesy and politeness. But, of course, the younger person flatly refuses the honor offered him. Finally, after many mutual compliments and words of persuasion, the first one (the oldest) accepts the invitation after all. Then the same ceremony is gone through between the second and the third, the third and the fourth, and so on, down to the youngest person attending. Furthermore, while the oldest persons are washing their hands, the younger ones are obliged to remain standing. Here again there is ceremony, exhortations for them to sit down, but if those who are urged to do so ignore these exhortations and continue to stand, then the older person considers it improper to

576 wash his hands sitting down, and he also stands up. The question of which of two persons shall first cross the threshold and

/25 cont./

585 as a sort of prediction that she, too, will give birth to a boy. A little later the bride is brought to the separate small house (amhara), and then the real wedding-feast begins.

On the second and third days the relatives come, meet the bride, and bring her presents, each according to his means. When they want to get acquainted with the bride, a friend of hers, her delegate (dade), lifts from her face the veil with which she is covered; the visitors greet the bride, and she, without saying a word, stands erect and quietly, with her eyes lowered. The responses are not made by her, but by her friend. When sufficient time has elapsed after the wedding, /26/ she answers questions addressed to her, but, instead of saying "yes" or "no," she only shakes her head.

The young bride remains in the amhara for some months; [592] then she is invited into the main house, and from this time on the whole care of the household is put on her shoulders. She always tries to satisfy her parents-in-law and to act according to their wishes. For several months she does not speak to anyone; afterwards she begins to speak, first to the younger people in the house and in the village, and later on also to the older ones, and last of all to her parents-in-law. The young bride is referred to by all the villagers as "our daughter-in-law"; they bring her various kinds of sewing-work, which she does without reward.

602 For many years the young couple avoids being seen together by the husband's parents, and they cannot eat together [606] in their presence as long as they live. In conversation with older [264] people, whether relatives or strangers, the wife cannot refer to her husband as "my husband," nor the husband to his wife as "my wife." The daughter-in-law may not sit down on the bench on [606] which her father-in-law or mother-in-law have been seated. [551] The wife can never call her husband by name and in cases of necessity manages instead with the pronouns "you" and "he." In the same way, she does not call by name her brother-in-law, her husband's foster parents, members of the family, the village elders, etc. The husband, on the other hand, only

avoids

/32 cont./

775 knapsack with great rejoicing to the burial-ground, where,
[766] through a hole drilled in the knapsack, the captured soul passes into the grave of the one who drowned.

769 In Abkhazia the dead are highly honored. The burial-
[764] grounds, as we have said, lie on high, picturesque places and are surrounded by fences. Shingled houses of a kind the Abkhaz do not make for themselves are built over the graves. Near the graves various fruit trees are planted -- apple, pear, peach, quince, etc. On the graves themselves the Abkhaz lay slices of melons, watermelons, cucumbers, etc. All this serves to confirm the belief that beyond the grave the souls of the dead require food, drink, lodging, etc., just like the living.

And in fact the Abkhaz do believe that the dead will enjoy, for example, the piece of melon placed on the grave. Because of this belief, for almost a full year after a death,
• [264] a special share of each meal is laid on the table for the deceased, and banquets are held in his memory, etc. Besides this, annual funeral-feasts are held on the eve of the paternal Saturday for those recently deceased, and on the paternal Saturday itself funeral-feasts are held for those deceased longer. At the slaughter of the sacrificial animal, the head of the family says, "If there
769 is a life beyond the grave, here is this (offering) to your soul."
782 Then as food is prepared and placed on the tablecloth, the head of the family stands in front of the tablecloth and again says, "Deceased ones /33/, grant us the blessing of your souls! Do not harm us by death (mortification)! Make us and our cattle increase (multiply)! etc. At the conclusion of this invocation, he makes the sign of the cross in the air over the tablecloth with an iron spit and says, "All this, prepared by the power of fire and water, is sacrificed to your souls, if indeed there be a life beyond the grave." Having said this, the head of the family takes a glass of wine and drinks it; after this he puts pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificed animal into a slice of gomi, pours a little wine over it, and throws it into the yard, saying:
775 "And this is for you, guiding and escorting souls." From this we
769 perceive that in Abkhaz belief the living relatives of the dead

A 262 [760] Food. The daily dishes of the Abkhaz are cornmeal mush (abysta), which is eaten with strips of cheese instead of a spoon, sour milk, and millet prepared with cheese (aĕladž) or with milk and cheese (atsamukhkua). In the winter they often eat meat, A [263] especially goat. As everywhere, red pepper, garlic, and bitter herbs serve as seasonings. The women cook cone-shaped breads (arvasa) in milk for festive days and in water during fasts.

B 269 Like the Abkhaz, the Cherkess like to eat raw cucumbers with butter, salt, and red pepper, cooked young pumpkins, carrots, wild asparagus, dandelions, and other vegetables; also much rice and thick, stiff mush (pasta) made of wheat grains cooked without salt; formerly it was more often made of unhulled millet (pasta) or hulled millet (hatlama). Flat cakes (medžaga) of ground millet were also baked. Mutton and beef is often eaten with a gravy of sour milk and grated garlic (tusluk) or of honey and butter (fau'tgo). Sour milk (škau), curds, and cheese fill out the daily fare. Festive dishes are: spelt noodles with diced, hardboiled eggs, curds, sour milk, some butter, onions, and garlic (khinkal); flat cakes of wheat flour, eggs, and milk, simmered in butter (širaldama); small cakes of the same dough filled with curds and onions or with honey (haliva), dried apples, apricots cooked in wine and honey, and other fruits, etc.

A C 272 273 Festive drinks are: whisky (arka, fada fitsa = black F.), mead (fada pliš = red F.), millet beer (fada khuš = white F.), honey water (fau'uš), cooked cider with added honey, raisins, and blackberry juice, beer (šür), light and heavy wines from wild and cultivated grapes.

A 597 Society and family. As among other mountain peoples (see p. 732 [untranslated]), so also among the Abkhaz the father (awn aihab) and the mother (awn aihab ap's) of the house manage A 597 the affairs of the kin group [Sippe] and perform the cult ceremonies. They have a peculiar custom: an adult can be adopted by another kin group as though he were a child if he has kissed the mother of the house on the breast three times.

C 565 Up to 1866 the same positions existed among the Cherkess as among the Osset: princes (pši), noblemen (work), who were followers of the former in battle; those freed by the princes

/53 cont./

782 and has been brought into the smithy, the blacksmith puts
326 all his instruments on the anvil; a brazier with coals is placed nearby and the whole family kneels down around the anvil. After taking off his bashlyk and his belt (as proof that he addresses Shasha with an open heart and mind), the smith lights a wax candle, throws incense on the coals of the brazier, and prays to Shasha to bless him and his family with good health and long life, and to make the instruments forged from iron do him good rather than harm. After all those present have pronounced "Amen" at the end of the prayer, the master of the house cuts pieces of the pie and of the organs roasted on the nut-wood spit and throws them on the brazier with the words: "Until that time when I am unable /54/ to feed with these little pieces all Shervashidzi and Anchabadzi, let no one in my family fall ill. I pray to you for this, Shasha, bringing to you a real sacrifice." The smith then cuts off just such little pieces from the other sacrifices and distributes them to all the members of the family, who eat them and wash them down with three swallows
• [273] of wine. The host designates the wine for this repast immediately after the harvesting of the grapes and saves it in a separate jug called shēsher gaphshi, buried in the smithy itself; under the fear of punishment by Shasha, no one dares to touch it, even in any extremity, before New Year's Eve, neither the host himself nor, all the more, one of the bystanders. Upon the completion of the praying, the prepared dishes are transferred to the house of the smith, where the neighbors gather and feast to the glory of Shasha until dawn.

782 Several princes also offer a prayer to Shasha on New
776 Year's Eve, in which case each of the persons present, having
565 been at one time dependent on these princes, brings a rooster. Shasha is one of those divinities called upon by the Abkhaz more often than others.

776 According to the understanding of the Abkhaz, the divinity whose name is called falsely immediately punishes the guilty one by those means or tools which are in the field of his specialty. Thus, for instance, one who has called

A 267 [760] Food. The daily dishes of the Abkhaz are cornmeal mush (abysta), which is eaten with strips of cheese instead of a spoon, sour milk, and millet prepared with cheese (aëladž) or with milk and cheese (atsamukhkua). In the winter they often eat meat, A [263] especially goat. As everywhere, red pepper, garlic, and bitter herbs serve as seasonings. The women cook cone-shaped breads (arvasa) in milk for festive days and in water during fasts.

E 269 Like the Abkhaz, the Cherkess like to eat raw cucumbers with butter, salt, and red pepper, cooked young pumpkins, carrots, wild asparagus, dandelions, and other vegetables; also much rice and thick, stiff mush (pasta) made of wheat grains cooked without salt; formerly it was more often made of unhulled millet (pasta) or hulled millet (hatlama). Flat cakes (medžaga) of ground millet were also baked. Mutton and beef is often eaten with a gravy of sour milk and grated garlic (tusluk) or of honey and butter (fau'tgo). Sour milk (škau), curds, and cheese fill out the daily fare. Festive dishes are: spelt noodles with diced, hardboiled eggs, curds, sour milk, some butter, onions, and garlic (khinkal); flat cakes of wheat flour, eggs, and milk, simmered in butter (širaldama); small cakes of the same dough filled with curds and onions or with honey (haliva), dried apples, apricots cooked in wine and honey, and other fruits, etc.

E 272 Festive drinks are: whisky (arka, fada fitsa = black F.), mead (fada pliš = red F.), millet beer (fada khuš = white F.), 273 honey water (fau'uš), cooked cider with added honey, raisins, and blackberry juice, beer (šür), light and heavy wines from wild and cultivated grapes.

A 597 Society and family. As among other mountain peoples (see p. 732 [untranslated]), so also among the Abkhaz the father (awn aihab) and the mother (awn aihab ap's) of the house manage A 597 the affairs of the kin group [Sippe] and perform the cult ceremonies. They have a peculiar custom: an adult can be adopted by another kin group as though he were a child if he has kissed the mother of the house on the breast three times.

C 565 Up to 1866 the same positions existed among the Cherkess as among the Osset: princes (pši), noblemen (work), who were followers of the former in battle; those freed by the princes

3: Janashia 1-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *The Gathering of Medicinal Herbs*

796 On Maundy Thursday, young maidens, led by old women, go
[278 into a forest early before the dawn, to gather medicinal herbs. They
784] must neither converse nor look back. When they dig out the herb, they throw salt into the soil, murmuring "*Àdgilə-dedop'al, bəkhwə̀ bàh'eyt*, the Queen-Earth, we have returned to thee thy share".
757 The following herbs are considered as particularly healing: (*a*) *ajmshyə̀-rshwə̀ga, Arum albispatum*,[1] literally denoting: *ajmshyə̀*, eyebrow; *ashwə̀ga*, "that with which they paint (a paint)"; it is used against diphtheria and scarlet fever; (*b*) *aztqyil* or *abgar ləmha, Aristolochia pontica*[1] (birthwort); the second Abkhasian term denotes, literally, "jackal's ear," used against erysipelas (St. Anthony's fire); and (*c*) *ajaqwa*, veratrum, according to Tchubinov (Geo. *Kharis-dzira*).
796 Having finished gathering, they return home in silence and without looking back.

Maundy Thursday is called by the Abkhasians *tchatchkhadə̀l*, derived, in all probability, from the Megrelian *tsashkha didi*, "the great Thursday."

5. *Jaja*[2]

796 On Maundy Thursday the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the
782 goddess of fruitfulness (of husbandry and horticulture) called *Jaja*.
776 For this occasion the Abkhasian women prepare all sorts of lenten
241] dishes, taking care always to include a pumpkin. The dishes are placed outside the house, in a corn-field, the offering to *Jaja* being accompanied by a supplication as follows: "The great *Jaja*! We have done all that was required of us, and have made the customary offering. We therefore humbly entreat thee to show thy bounty towards us and grant us a good harvest in the field and in the kitchen garden!" As I have stated before, the Abkhasians have no set prayer formulas, and each prays as best he can.

As always, the offering is left for a few minutes wherever it was placed, and the supplicants stand before it, and watch with emotion how the spirit of the goddess invisibly satiates herself with the gifts of men! Needless to say they themselves consume the "remains".

796 As I have already remarked, there are two Abkhasian gods of
241 fruitfulness: the god *Andə̀p'a-ndga* and the goddess *Jaja*.[3] *Jàja*, as imagined by an Abkhaz, is a broad-shouldered woman, of small stature. More than once Abkhasians have seen her wandering about the fields

[1] According to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden.
[2] It is of interest to elucidate what relation *Jaja* holds to Georgian *jojoba*; see I. Javakhishvili, *A History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian), p. 135.
[3] The relation of these two gods is difficult to determine; nor do we know the relation of *Jaja* to *Ayt'ar*.

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[231] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[341] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

[757 cont.]

K 233 The Kabardin still occupy themselves principally with the raising of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses, which have Arabic blood, are taller and more powerfully built than the C Abkhaz horses, and are famous for their beauty and endurance. 241 The other Cherkess have changed over more to agriculture since the end of the fighting with the Russians.

They clear the land that they wish to seed, burn off the grass in the spring, as is also done on the pastures and meadows, and then plow and harrow with the brush-harrow [Strauchegge] (see above, p. 686 [untranslated]); until recently there was no fertilization with manure. Earlier, when the land around a village was exhausted, they merely dismantled the huts and settled C in another place.

C 256 While the grain is ground in a water or horse mill, millet is husked by means of a pitted surface [Anke] (see above, p. 693 [untranslated]) and a wooden disk turned by hand, as is customC A ary in Finland, and ground with a hand-mill by the women.

231 Bees are often kept here, as in Abkhazia.

The beehives resemble those commonly used by us; they are cut out of linden bark or plaited out of willow twigs and smeared with clay and cow manure. As protection from the rain, a thick straw plaiting is laid on top. [758] Swarms that have flown out are caught with a bark cover fastened on a stick. In July and August, the hives are placed in the forests of the foothills, otherwise near the villages.

A C 462 The women have the same tasks as among the mountain peoples; among the Abkhaz, however, the men help in A C the fields, fruit orchards, vineyards, and at other tasks. Among [281] other things, the women also produce morocco leather (tsuš), A E from which belts, shoes, bedding, etc. are made. Besides ves[217] [293] sels and utensils, the men carve beautiful spoons out of wood and horn, build wagons (γkū) with two disk-wheels that are hewn out of a single piece of wood and the axle turns with them (cf. Fig. 416 [in untranslated portion]). They used to produce their own A C [389] gunpowder, leeching the saltpeter (gin-khuš = powder-salt) for it from sheep manure. [Fig. 450 appears here.]

A [754 cont.]
340 for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in
[354] the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide
A 352 bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whet-
A 412 stone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing
415 millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and
499 horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons
353 hang on the walls.

A 342 Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

A 351 [755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed
343 hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork, plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press,
A 285 barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are
245 round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

C 361 The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is
C 349 built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads
C 352 to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the
354 Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an outside wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

A [See Top of This Page--Analyst]

339 factories newly created in Komsomolsk, Khabarovsk, and Londoko in Birobidzhan shows. The last-named cement plant has very recently been expanded into the largest such plant in the Far Eastern region next to the plant at Spassk. For the supplying of Transbaykal a cement plant has been newly erected in Temlyuy, 98 kilometers west of Ulan-Ude.

288 In light industry, a new cloth factory in Ulan-Ude is worth mentioning. It was moved here in 1941 and since then it has been so greatly expanded that it delivers several million meters of cloth a year. It is the first cloth factory in the Far Eastern regions. In Birobidzhan there is an important plant in the clothing and knitting goods industry; Khabarovsk and Vladivostok have additional large undertakings in the manufacture of ready-made clothing. In the fu
295 goods and leather industry there are two outstanding central points t be mentioned, both of which are in Transbaykal: Chita with the largest fur and leather works in the Far Eastern regions; and Chikoyskiy Zavod, which lies east of Kyakhta on the river of the same name, which draws its raw materials from the Mongolian People's Republic. The production of Chita alone is sufficient to supply all of east Siberia with furs and leather. Shoe and other leather goods factories exist in various places. The shoe factories produce approximately 3 million
323 pairs a year. Only one plant--although, to be sure, one of large dimensions--is available to supply a large part of the Far Eastern regions with glass, glass goods, crockery, and porcelain. This plant lies in Ulan-Ude and represents the largest glass and glass goods factory in Siberia. In addition to window and mirror glass, it also supplies special glass for special purposes. According to the projected capacity it is supposed to be in a position to deliver 14,000 tons of plate glass and 6,000 tons of mirror glass. Ulan-Ude is responsible for supplying all of east Siberia with glass. Mention has already been made of the glass factory in Magadan. A smaller factory is supposed to still exist in the Vladivostok area.

256 The food and luxuries industry is represented by numerous small plants in the agricultural regions. Khabarovsk, Svobodnyy, and Blagoveshchensk have large mills. The first two have a processing capacity of 200 tons of grain per day; the Blagoveshchensk mill is supposed to be even bigger. The large bread and other baked goods plants, which are typical of Soviet cities, are also to be encountered here.
255 Khabarovsk has the most important installations of this type. The surplus of meat produced in Transbaykal are processed into preserved products and canned goods in the two meat plants in Ulan-Ude and in Chita.

2; Byhan--2 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz RI3

[750]

142
091
309
516

Fig. 441. Abkhaz (From Count J. Zichy)

A 181 [751 cont.]
Abkhaz are similarly endowed, but are distinguished from the former by greater irritability, instability, garrulity, politeness, and, like the Mingrel, are notorious thieves. [Fig. 442 appears here.]

A 101 [621] [619] The Abkhaz now consist of 24 or 25 kin groups or communities; as tribes, the following have been mentioned earlier: the Ubykh between Khamise and Shakhe, the Abadzekh between Pshekups and Byelaya, the Dzhigeth between Shakhe and Mzymta; farther south up to the Bzyb, the Bzubb, up to the Kodor, the true Abkhaz, and in their hinterland the Tsebeldin; up to the Galisga, the Abshav and, bordering on Mingrelia, the Samurzakhan.

A 89 177 [302] Dress. The Abkhaz women wear Cherkess, or nowadays usually European, clothing (see Fig. 443), the men the Cherkess coat (see Fig. 441); they usually shave the head bare.

C 291 The Cherkess attire for men has spread widely among the Cossacks and [752] [Fig. 443 appears here] through all of Caucasia as far as the lowland Georgians in the south, and the A [1197] women's attire has been adopted by the neighboring Abkhaz, Karachai, and Osset. The men's costume (see Fig. 442) consists of a short (yana) of white linen or red taffeta, baggy pants, a silk embroidered undergarment with a collar, a long robe (tsié) open at the chest, made of black or gray cloth, with cartridge pockets (khazyr) on the breast, narrow belt strap, leather leggings, sandals of leather or linden bark, cap (papakh) of white or black sheepskin (see Fig. 444), and in addition, for bad weather, a black coat (tsauka, burka) of goat and sheep wool, with a hood (g'etapt) that is draped around in such a manner C 302 that the right arm remains free. They cut their hair off short, leaving only a braided tuft (haidar). Out-of-doors they carry C 411 a dagger (kama, see Fig. 449) on the belt, and from a sword-belt they hang a saber, the blade of which is often Damascus, Khorassan, Hungarian, or Lezgin work and which is often inlayed C [439] [495] with silver or gold on a black background, as are also the studs of the horse's harness and other parts of the armament. This further consists of: pistol (see Fig. 450), flintlock rifle with

A 291 192

[752 cont.]

Fig. 443. Abkhaz Woman

C 411 [439] octagonal damascened barrel, in earlier times imported from Bakhchisarai in the Crimea, in a sheath of skin, leather, or felt (see Fig. 451, 1), or a knout (see Fig. 451, 8, 10). C 714 411 Earlier it also included (see Fig. 445) a shirt of mail (affé) with a cotton lining, [Fig. 444 appears here] [753] arm bands (abkhumbukh), hand guard (aštеld), helmet (taš) or skullcap (kip'a), battle-ax, javelin with barbs, bow, quiver, C [554] and arrows. Only the nobles were permitted to use white eagle feathers for feathering the arrows.

A 291 The parts of the women's costume are (see Fig. 446): a thin shirt of red silk (kanaŭs) with long sleeves, over that an undergarment of striped silk with sleeves that are narrow at the top, wide at the bottom, and pleated, over it a bodice with [Fig. 445 appears here] gold and silver embroidery and lacing of silver balls and plates, and a long coat with a wide richly decorated piece of material set in at each sleeve, pants usu-

Fig. 444. Kabardin Cap of Lambskin (From Count J. Zichy)

K [391] ally of yellow silk, (formerly among the Abkhaz, white for girls, red for women, blue for widows), leather belt with

[753 cont.]
silver and gold studs, shoes of soft leather and gold or silver embroidered, pointed overshoes with thick soles and high heels, on the head a 15-centimeter-high conical cap of silk richly ornamented with gold and silver lace, buttons, plates, and chains, and finally a white interwoven veil which hangs far down from the cap. The braid of hair is entwined with white stripes of

Fig. 445. Cherkess fully armed, with Woman and Girl. Domed tents in background. (From Spencer, 1837.)

cotton that hang down to the feet. Under the shirt the girls always wear a tight bodice of leather that is not taken off until the wedding.

Dwelling. The farmsteads of the Abkhaz do not lie next to one another as in a village, but are widely scattered and hidden in the dense tree-growth of the gardens in the vicinity of a spring or brook. The newer houses are [754] made of planks on piles, in the style of the Mingrel or Imeretin. The older huts are the most primitive in all the Caucasian forest regions and resemble the huts in the summer encampments of Macedonian shepherds.
[Fig. 446 appears here.]

KAE
291
K
53
142

[754 cont./

Fig. 446. Kabardin Woman (From Count J Zichy)

A
342

The main house (p'ats'kha) is rectangular; the walls are merely plaited twigs and even in winter are only rarely covered with ferns. The flat or slanted thatched roof is supported at the front door by two inclined posts (amakratl-khkwa = scissors) meeting at the top, one post in the back wall, and four corner posts standing at a distance of some 30 to 60 centimeters from the house. The front part is the living space; the back part, partitioned off, is reserved

/13 cont./

576 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge mtsuge seizgat," i.e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

[608] [155]

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

181 [565] [411] [293]

Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

526 [541] 538

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [795] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes marula (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pistol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both [302] sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [268] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few

2: Byhan--2 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz RI3

[750]

142
091
308
516

Fig. 441. Abkhaz (From Count J. Zichy)

A 181 [751 cont.]
Abkhaz are similarly endowed, but are distinguished from the former by greater irritability, instability, garrulity, politeness, and, like the Mingrel, are notorious thieves. [Fig. 442 appears here.]

A 101 [621] [619] The Abkhaz now consist of 24 or 25 kin groups or communities; as tribes, the following have been mentioned earlier: the Ubykh between Khamise and Shakhe, the Abadzekh between Pshekups and Byelaya, the Dzhigeth between Shakhe and Mzymta; farther south up to the Bzyb, the Bzubb, up to the Kodor, the true Abkhaz, and in their hinterland the Tsebeldin; up to the Galisga, the Abshav and, bordering on Mingrelia, the Samurzakhan.

A 291 177 [302] Dress. The Abkhaz women wear Cherkess, or nowadays usually European, clothing (see Fig. 443), the men the Cherkess coat (see Fig. 441); they usually shave the head bare.

C 291 A [177] The Cherkess attire for men has spread widely among the Cossacks and [752] [Fig. 443 appears here] through all of Caucasia as far as the lowland Georgians in the south, and the women's attire has been adopted by the neighboring Abkhaz, Karachai, and Osset. The men's costume (see Fig. 442) consists of a short (yana) of white linen or red taffeta, baggy pants, a silk embroidered undergarment with a collar, a long robe (tsié) open at the chest, made of black or gray cloth, with cartridge pockets (khazyr) on the breast, narrow belt strap, leather leggings, sandals of leather or linden bark, cap (papakh) of white or black sheepskin (see Fig. 444), and in addition, for bad weather, a black coat (tšauka, burka) of goat and sheep wool, with a hood (g'etapt) that is draped around in such a manner that the right arm remains free. They cut their hair off short, leaving only a braided tuft (haidar). Out-of-doors they carry a dagger (kama, see Fig. 449) on the belt, and from a sword-belt they hang a saber, the blade of which is often Damascus, Khorassan, Hungarian, or Lezgin work and which is often inlayed with silver or gold on a black background, as are also the studs of the horse's harness and other parts of the armament. This further consists of: pistol (see Fig. 450), flintlock rifle with

C 302 C 411 C [439] [492]

23: Shabad N-4 (no date) 1951 Rl Soviet Union Rl
Abchas-RI 2
Adshar RI 4

Tkvarcheli, which developed in the 1930's has overtaken the older Tkibuli as the principal coal-mining center of the Georgian SSR and supplies coking coal to the Rustavi steel mills.

ADZHAR AUTONOMOUS SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC
Capital, Batumi; area, 1,100, population, 195,000

The Adzhar Autonomous SSR or Adzharistan lies in the southwestern corner of the Georgian SSR, between the Black Sea and the Turkey-USSR frontier. Its basic Adzhar population consists of Georgians who became Moslems under previous Turkish rule. The region is generally mountainous and has a humid subtropical climate and a yearly rainfall of about 100 inches. The inhabitants of the higher, forested inland section are engaged principally in livestock rearing, lumbering, and tobacco growing and are poorly supplied with transportation routes. The narrow littoral is the most important area of Adzharistan. Here the subtropical climate favors such important crops as tea, tangerines, lemons, oranges, grapefruit, tung and camphor woods, bamboo, and so forth. Adzharistan is the principal USSR producer of tea and citrus fruits. Many tourist and seaside resorts are scattered along the coast, which is served by the railroad from Tbilisi and Baku. Crude oil and kerosene pipe lines from Baku terminate at Batumi, the capital and industrial center of the republic. A hydroelectric station built on the Adzharis-Tskhali River, east of Batumi, supplies power for the industries.

Batumi is the terminus of the Transcaucasian Railroad and one of the principal petroleum-loading ports of the USSR. Crude oil, which is piped from Baku, is processed in several cracking plants. It has an iron foundry, a tea-picking-machinery plant, tobacco factories and clothing mills. North of the city are botanical gardens where flora of the humid subtropical zone are grown. Near by extend large plantations of tea, tobacco, and citrus fruits.

SOUTH OSSETIAN AUTONOMOUS OBLAST
Capital, Stalinir; area, 1,500, population, 120,000

The South Ossetian Autonomous Oblast (Russian, *Yugo-Osetinskaya Avtonomnaya Oblast'*) is the southern portion of the Ossetian domain, in the central Greater Caucasus, of which the northern section is constituted into the North Ossetian Autonomous SSR within the Russian SFSR. It is situated on the southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus and watered mainly by the Liakhvi River. The population is 69 percent

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/52 cont./

2. Ibid., p. 162.

175 764 of Syracuse (who lived about the middle of the fourth century B.C.) said /53/ that "it is not accepted among the Colchians either to bury or to burn the corpses of men. They put these corpses in fresh animal-hides and hang them on trees. They commit to the earth the corpses of women, however, ... They venerate heaven and earth above all" (1).

1. Ibid., p. 208.

20.

Shasha

●326 796 Under the name of Shasha the Abkhaz understand the inventor of the craft of the smith. They say of him, "Shasha khe ah-dou," which means, "Shasha, the great lord of trades." Shasha or Shash was the first blacksmith. He picked up the red-hot iron, not with tongs, but with his hands, and he forged it, not on an anvil, but on his knees. He is the inventor not only of the craft of the smith, but the inventor-patron of 363 other crafts as well. The smithy with all its appurtenances is the image of Shasha (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888, No. 186.

[982] 796 [914] Prayers are offered up to him on New Year's Eve, and the most complete of the ceremonies to him is held by the blacksmiths and the locksmiths.

782 326 On New Year's Eve the master of the house kills either a calf or a ram, and his wife kills a rooster for each member of the family and prepares a pie of wheat-flour and fresh cheese. The livers and hearts of all the slaughtered animals are roasted separately; for this, instead of a spit, a stick from a young nut-tree is used. When the food is ready

/53 cont./

782 and has been brought into the smithy, the blacksmith puts
326 all his instruments on the anvil; a brazier with coals is placed nearby and the whole family kneels down around the anvil. After taking off his bashlyk and his belt (as proof that he addresses Shasha with an open heart and mind), the smith lights a wax candle, throws incense on the coals of the brazier, and prays to Shasha to bless him and his family with good health and long life, and to make the instruments forged from iron do him good rather than harm. After all those present have pronounced "Amen" at the end of the prayer, the master of the house cuts pieces of the pie and of the organs roasted on the nut-wood spit and throws them on the brazier with the words: "Until that time when I am unable /54/ to feed with these little pieces all Shervashidzi and Anchabadzi, let no one in my family fall ill. I pray to you for this, Shasha, bringing to you a real sacrifice." The smith then cuts off just such little pieces from the other sacrifices and distributes them to all the members of the family, who eat them and wash them down with three swallows
[273] of wine. The host designates the wine for this repast immediately after the harvesting of the grapes and saves it in a separate jug called shēsher gaphshi, buried in the smithy itself; under the fear of punishment by Shasha, no one dares to touch it, even in any extremity, before New Year's Eve, neither the host himself nor, all the more, one of the bystanders. Upon the completion of the praying, the prepared dishes are transferred to the house of the smith, where the neighbors gather and feast to the glory of Shasha until dawn.

782 Several princes also offer a prayer to Shasha on New
796 Year's Eve, in which case each of the persons present, having
565 been at one time dependent on these princes, brings a rooster. Shasha is one of those divinities called upon by the Abkhaz more often than others.

796 According to the understanding of the Abkhaz, the divinity whose name is called falsely immediately punishes the guilty one by those means or tools which are in the field of his specialty. Thus, for instance, one who has called

/54 cont./

776 falsely the name of Aphi, who commands the thunderstorms, cannot be punished by means of firearms or side arms, which make up the specialty of Shasha, etc.

782 326 Oaths to Shasha are of two kinds: in the smithy and under the open sky. In the first instance, the smith, having placed the hammer on the anvil and crossed his hands on his breast, stands to one side of it, the one swearing the oath on the other side of the anvil, opposite the smith, and the one concerning whose affairs the oath is being sworn stands to the side. The one swearing the oath, having taken the hammer into his hands, says: "If I am guilty of that of which they accuse me, then may Shasha smash open my head on the anvil"; upon these words, he hits the anvil three times with the hammer, and the oath is considered sworn. In the second 782 instance, two sticks are driven into the ground, one opposite the other; on them are hung loaded rifles whose muzzles are trained on the space occupied by the one swearing the oath; those present stand to the side. The one swearing the oath pronounces, "If I said a lie, may Shasha shoot bullets through my head /55/ from these rifles," and he walks through the space between the rifles three times.

755 782 326 [787] At the first sign of sickness accompanied by headaches, the person who has taken a false oath asks his relatives to find out from a female fortune-teller the cause of his ailment. The fortune-teller, who has usually heard beforehand, from the blacksmith himself about everyone who has taken an oath, throws some beans and looks at the stars, and then indicates the cause of the sickness: a false oath sworn to Shasha on such and such a day, in connection with such and such a matter, and in such and such a smithy. One of the ailing person's relatives goes to the person concerning whose affairs the false oath was sworn and by gifts induces him to pray to Shasha to forgive the patient, promising, of course, that upon recovery the patient will give him complete satisfaction. Then they both go to the smithy where the oath was taken, and the

/55 cont./

755 782 326 sick man's accuser, taking off his belt to bear witness to the sincerity of his address to Shasha, approaches the anvil and utters a prayer in which he requests Shasha to deliver the guilty one from his ailment, with a pledge that after his recovery the sick man will come himself to beg for forgiveness from Shasha; then, leaving a piece of iron in the smithy, he goes to set the patient's mind at reast. If the sick man recovers, he satisfies the injured one and goes with him to the smithy, and, having put a small silver coin (no less than two rubles) on the anvil, thanks Shasha for his recovery; the ram, the bread, and the wine that he has brought with him are given to the blacksmith, from whom, after the prayer, he receives pieces of the ram's liver and heart; he sends these to his family as a token of Shasha's forgiveness. In company with his relatives, the injured party, and the blacksmith, he himself eats the food that was brought along in the blacksmith's house.

21.

The Prayer to Eyrig-aatsnykh

679 782 [776] [778] Eyrig-aatsnykh is the patron of stealing, plundering, and robbery. Beyond the river Bzyb this deity is called Chugurukhnykh; all the Abkhaz setting out to steal among the Ubykh, Shapsug, and other mountain-dwellers used to bring offerings to Chugurukhnykh, whose altar, if this expression may be used here, /56/ was located on a cliff beyond the fortification of Gagra. Prayers to this god are offered only by those who practice the "arts" of which he is the patron. An offering of four cone-shaped loaves of bread is brought; a prayer is said over them, asking a blessing upon the enterprise and giving a promise to sacrifice something else to the god in case of success. The loaves of bread are taken along on the trip. The thank-offering consists of something of the stolen goods, and if a horse or a head of cattle is taken, the sacrifice consists of a lock of the stolen animal's hair;

[758 cont.]

Silversmiths and blacksmiths are almost the only artisans; the former occupied themselves earlier with the ornamentation of weapons in particular; the latter, of whom there are two or three in every village, make dagger blades, sickles, bits for horses, horseshoes, and the like. Among the Abkhaz their profession is particularly honored and esteemed (see p. 25 , cf. Africa).

In earlier times trade was based exclusively on barter. Before the incursion of the Russians (end of the eighteenth century), the Cherkess traded salt, among other things, to the Osset, bringing it on large, two-

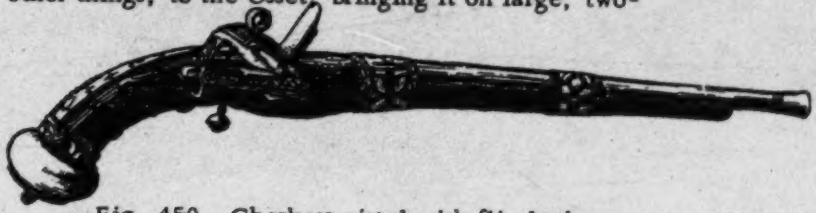


Fig. 450. Cherkess pistol with flintlock, bone pommel, and silver fittings (1/4 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

wheeled carts, drawn by six to eight oxen, from the salt-lakes along the Caspian Sea between Terek and Kuma. As products of their industry they sold principally wax, honey, skins, cloth, capes, and the like, as well as slaves. Linen material in pieces the size of a shirt served as a measure of value for all wares.

At that time the men, when not engaged in war, devoted themselves by preference to hunting and raiding. In order not to be understood by other people, and also to confuse the game, two kinds of secret language were used: the words in the one (šakobže) are completely different from the Cherkess language; in the other (farsipse) a ri or fe is inserted after every syllable.

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[28] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
513 beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[031] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
[541] beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special compartment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the [233] cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the [252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the [415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is 352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the 415 utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat 412 stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family 585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

/17 cont./

342 newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one [585] small house.

The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, 262 corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten, [263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all re- [888] ligious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all [593] family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are 428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided [592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

[753 cont.]
silver and gold studs, shoes of soft leather and gold or silver embroidered, pointed overshoes with thick soles and high heels, on the head a 15-centimeter-high conical cap of silk richly ornamented with gold and silver lace, buttons, plates, and chains, and finally a white interwoven veil which hangs far down from the cap. The braid of hair is entwined with white stripes of

Fig. 445. Cherkess fully armed, with Woman and Girl. Domed tents in background. (From Spencer, 1837.)

cotton that hang down to the feet. Under the shirt the girls always wear a tight bodice of leather that is not taken off until the wedding.

Dwelling. The farmsteads of the Abkhaz do not lie next to one another as in a village, but are widely scattered and hidden in the dense tree-growth of the gardens in the vicinity of a spring or brook. The newer houses are [754] made of planks on piles, in the style of the Mingrel or Imeretin. The older huts are the most primitive in all the Caucasian forest regions and resemble the huts in the summer encampments of Macedonian shepherds. [Fig. 446 appears here.]

K
AE
391
K
53
142

[754 cont./

Fig. 446. Kabardin Woman (From Count J Zichy)

A
342

The main house (p'ats'kha) is rectangular; the walls are merely plaited twigs and even in winter are only rarely covered with ferns. The flat or slanted thatched roof is supported at the front door by two inclined posts (amakratl-khkwa = scissors) meeting at the top, one post in the back wall, and four corner posts standing at a distance of some 30 to 60 centimeters from the house. The front part is the living space; the back part, partitioned off, is reserved

A [754 cont.]
for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whetstone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons hang on the walls.

Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

[755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork, plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press, barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an outside wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

[See Top of This Page--Analyst]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *d-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaĥwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *ahlakùt-s* (little wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*d-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; *dsdsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswd-ĥwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the house, *dishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *d-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswd*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *dămən*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwdyt'ar! bzhyə-nɔ̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzdk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons* (*to whom are subject seven gods*), *and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[1] *Alaĥwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *hwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *govt* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An, Anu—Antswd*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are included in both pleiades.

A [754 cont.]
340 for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in
[354] the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney
tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide
A 352 bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on
which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whet-
A 412 stone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing
415 millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and
490 horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons
353 hang on the walls.

A 342 Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

A [755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed
351 hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork,
● 343 plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press,
A barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are
285 round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15
245 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

C 361 The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is
C 349 built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the
C 352 Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an out-
354 side wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

[See Top of This Page--Qualyst]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

himself, by placing before the "icon" also the amount he was to pay to the opponent.

Muhammadans also take the propitiatory oath at Ilori, together with the Christians.[1]

There are many stories current about the power of the Ilori "icon" to work miracles. I learned one of them from the lips of Biram Tkhazou and Seyt Zhania.

"In ancient times the Ilori 'icon' determined all the disputes of human mortals in the following manner. High up in the centre of the church, hung the golden scales of Justice. Under these scales stood the suitors, praying zealously to the Ilori 'icon', who inclined the scale over the head of the righteous. Knowing this, Abkhasians would not venture to break the law or wrong one another; peace and happiness reigned upon the earth. But men are cunning; an impious Abkhaz decided to deceive the great Ilori 'icon'. He owed a neighbour of his a hundred *manat'i* (= rubles) which he would not pay. The creditor complained. They both went to Ilori. When they appeared before the 'icon', the debtor handed to his creditor his staff which contained the hundred *manat'i*. The scale inclined towards the creditor, thus acquitting him of the charge. He took back his staff and left the church. The Ilori 'icon' was 'offended' and because of this fraudulence on the part of one Abkhaz it punished the entire people: the 'icon' took the scales of Justice to heaven for ever."

In ancient times the Ilori "icon" provided oxen for itself on the eve of the wake festival. The Commission assured me that eye-witnesses of this miracle were still living in Abkhasia, but none knew their names. As this providing of the oxen is described by A. Lamberti in the manner in which the Abkhasians relate it to-day, I will quote the description from his work.[2]

"On November 20th[3] they celebrate St. George's Day. A superstition prevails among the people that this celebrated martyr, on this day, procures for himself an ox from the neighbourhood and brings it by night into the Ilori Church dedicated to him. This church is held in great esteem, not only by all the Megrels, but by the neighbouring peoples also. Therefore it is very rich in gold and silver[4]—the icons are all made of these metals and are adorned, too, with precious stones; and even the doors are mounted in thick sheets of silver. So revered is this church by all the people, that, although situated

[1] In Northern Abkhasia *Dadwap'sh* is endowed with a similar power.

[2] A. Lamberti lived as a missionary for eighteen years in Megrelia (1635–1653), and, according to him (and also to other sources), the present-day southern Abkhasia (Abchua) constituted then part of Megrelia, the northern boundary being the River Kodor.

[3] The 10th of our (old) style.—N. J.

[4] At the present time, too, it is the wealthiest and the most influential of all the churches of Abkhasia.—N. J.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

in a distant country place and near the sea-coast, thieves have never entered there, nor has any enemy ship raided it or despoiled it of its wealth. Indeed, so highly is this saint (the Ilori 'icon') honoured, that not only would the valuable contents of the church not be stolen, but, even if precious stones were scattered *outside* the church, in its vicinity, no one would touch them. (It is the same even to-day, N.J.) In addition to the local population, this saint is also feared by the Abkhazes,[1] and even by the Turks, deprived though they are of the light of Christian religion. They all worship, and fear, this sacred object (the 'icon', N.J.) . . .

"On November 20th, the Prince (of Megrelia, N.J.) goes to the Ilori Church accompanied by his court officials, nobles, and the people of Odishi (i.e. Megrelia), to participate in the feast of the 'ox'. Not only do the Odishians go there on that day, but also the Abkhazes and Svans, in great numbers. The church is enclosed in stone walls about the height of fifteen spans. At its entrance are large gates surmounted by a beautiful campanile containing many bells. On the eve of the feast, in the dusk of the evening, the Prince, accompanied by a large retinue of bishops, princes, and nobles, rides up to these gates, orders them to be locked, then seals the keyhole with his own seal and returns home. The following morning, before dawn, the Prince, accompanied by the same retinue, again rides up to the gates. When they have assured themselves that the seal has not been tampered with, the Prince removes the seal and opens the gates. Within the Church walls, the ox is found. At the sight of this miracle, the people, with great fervour, offer up their thanks to St. George, and the church bells ring out the glad tidings of the miracle all over the country-side. Everyone is firmly convinced that St. George himself provided the ox and led it with his own hands into the enclosure. Also, it is said, the saint leads the ox thrice from the mountains to the sea and back, and offers the ox, thus sanctified, to the people as a gift . . .

"A long time ago, so it is said, an unbeliever (the Abkhazes say that he was a Muslim from Trebizond, N.J.) came here from a country many hundreds of miles away from Odishi. After witnessing the miracle and how the people celebrated the occasion, this obstinate man not only disbelieved, but began to mock the Christians, telling them that they were light-minded and foolish enough to believe anything. In spite of his attitude, the people tried to persuade him to embrace the true Faith of Christ, and unanimously affirmed that all the miracles of St. George were really true. 'Very well, then,' said he, 'I will do this. At my home, two hundred miles away, I have an

[1] In Ilori the Megrelian language prevails to this day; many, however, know Abkhasian also.—N.J.

[754 cont.]
for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whetstone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons hang on the walls.

Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

[755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork, plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press, barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an outside wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

[See Top of This Page--Analyst]

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special com-
[233] partment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the
[252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the
[415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is
• 352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some
415 of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd
412 is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family
585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

A [754 cont.]
A 340 for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in
A 354 the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney
tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide
A 352 bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on
which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whet-
A 412 stone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing
A 415 millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and
A 490 horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons
A 353 hang on the walls.

A 342 Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

A 351 [755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed
A 343 hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork, plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press,
A 285 barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are
A 245 round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

C 361 The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is
C 349 built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads
C 352 to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the
C 354 Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an outside wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

7 A [See Top of This Page--Analyst]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaħwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the [462] fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [784] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsàsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ħwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [352] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nɔ̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə* [539] *—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number 776 801 seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaħwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *ħwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian [193] *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with [821] the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [171] included in both pleiades.

A [754 cont.]
340 for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in
[354] the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide
A 352 bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whet-
A 412 stone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing
415 millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and
499 horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons
353 hang on the walls.

A 342 Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

A [755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed
351 hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork,
343 plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press,
A barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are
285 round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15
245 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

C 361 The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is
C 349 built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the
C 352 Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an out-
354 side wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

A [See Top of This Page--Qualyst]

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special compartment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the [233] cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

• 354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the [252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the [415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is 352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the 415 utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat 412 stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family 585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

A [754 cont.]
for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whetstone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons hang on the walls.

Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

[755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork, plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press, barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an outside wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

[See Top of This Page--Analyst]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibZhq

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. ÀYT'AR-NƏ̀ħWA*

1. *Jabràn*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nə̀ħwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nə̀ħwa*, which is derived from *a-nə̀ħwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nəħwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabràn*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashə̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswə̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəsa*, a combination of *adswə̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *àrsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'ħwəs-tsk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "ħ" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "ħw" represents a labialized variety of "ħ". [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† The combination "dsw" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "ds". For this latter sound see p. 329 (*ts'*). [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianski Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.

(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashə̀* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

[753 cont.]
silver and gold studs, shoes of soft leather and gold or silver embroidered, pointed overshoes with thick soles and high heels, on the head a 15-centimeter-high conical cap of silk richly ornamented with gold and silver lace, buttons, plates, and chains, and finally a white interwoven veil which hangs far down from the cap. The braid of hair is entwined with white stripes of

Fig. 445. Cherkess fully armed, with Woman and Girl. Domed tents in background. (From Spencer, 1837.)

cotton that hang down to the feet. Under the shirt the girls always wear a tight bodice of leather that is not taken off until the wedding.

Dwelling. The farmsteads of the Abkhaz do not lie next to one another as in a village, but are widely scattered and hidden in the dense tree-growth of the gardens in the vicinity of a spring or brook. The newer houses are [754] made of planks on piles, in the style of the Mingrel or Imeretin. The older huts are the most primitive in all the Caucasian forest regions and resemble the huts in the summer encampments of Macedonian shepherds.
[Fig. 446 appears here.]

[757 cont.]

K 233 The Kabardin still occupy themselves principally with the raising of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses, which have Arabic blood, are taller and more powerfully built than the C 241 Abkhaz horses, and are famous for their beauty and endurance. The other Cherkess have changed over more to agriculture since the end of the fighting with the Russians.

They clear the land that they wish to seed, burn off the grass in the spring, as is also done on the pastures and meadows, and then plow and harrow with the brush-harrow [Strauchegge] (see above, p. 686 [untranslated]); until recently there was no fertilization with manure. Earlier, when the land around a village was exhausted, they merely dismantled the huts and settled C 256 in another place.

While the grain is ground in a water or horse mill, millet is husked by means of a pitted surface [Anke] (see above, p. 693 [untranslated]) and a wooden disk turned by hand, as is customC A 231 ary in Finland, and ground with a hand-mill by the women.

Bees are often kept here, as in Abkhazia.

The beehives resemble those commonly used by us; they are cut out of linden bark or plaited out of willow twigs and smeared with clay and cow manure. As protection from the rain, a thick straw plaiting is laid on top. [758] Swarms that have flown out are caught with a bark cover fastened on a stick. In July and August, the hives are placed in the forests of the foothills, otherwise near the villages.

A C 467 The women have the same tasks as among the mountain peoples; among the Abkhaz, however, the men help in A 2 the fields, fruit orchards, vineyards, and at other tasks. Among [281] other things, the women also produce morocco leather (tsuš), from which belts, shoes, bedding, etc. are made. Besides ves- A 2 sels and utensils, the men carve beautiful spoons out of wood and [412] horn, build wagons (ɣkū) with two disk-wheels that are hewn out [493] of a single piece of wood and the axle turns with them (cf. Fig. 416 [in untranslated portion]). They used to produce their own A 2 gunpowder, leeching the saltpeter (gin-khuš = powder-salt) for [389] it from sheep manure. [Fig. 450 appears here.]

/13 cont./

576 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a [608] [755] long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge mtsuge seizgat," i.e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging 181 the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children [565] of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, [411] [293] dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

526 Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games [541] are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 538 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

A C 326 [758 cont.]

Silversmiths and blacksmiths are almost the only artisans; the former occupied themselves earlier with the ornamentation of weapons in particular; the latter, of whom there are two or three in every village, make dagger blades, sickles, bits for horses, horseshoes, and the like. Among the Abkhaz their profession is particularly honored and esteemed (see p. 25 , cf. Africa).

A C [411] [412] [492] E 437 C 439

In earlier times trade was based exclusively on barter. Before the incursion of the Russians (end of the eighteenth century), the Cherkess traded salt, among other things, to the Osset, bringing it on large, two-

C [411]

Fig. 450. Cherkess pistol with flintlock, bone pommel, and silver fittings (1/4 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

C [493] [317] wheeled carts, drawn by six to eight oxen, from the salt-lakes along the Caspian Sea between Terek and Kuma. As products of their industry they sold principally wax, honey, skins, cloth, capes, and the like, as well as slaves. Linen material in pieces the size of a shirt served as a measure of value for all wares.

C 436

At that time the men, when not engaged in war, devoted themselves by preference to hunting and raiding. In order not to be understood by other people, and also to confuse the game, two kinds of secret language were used: the words in the one (šakobže) are completely different from the Cherkess language; in the other (farsipse) a ri or fe is inserted after every syllable.

C 224 721 C 198

[759] [Fig. 451 appears here.]

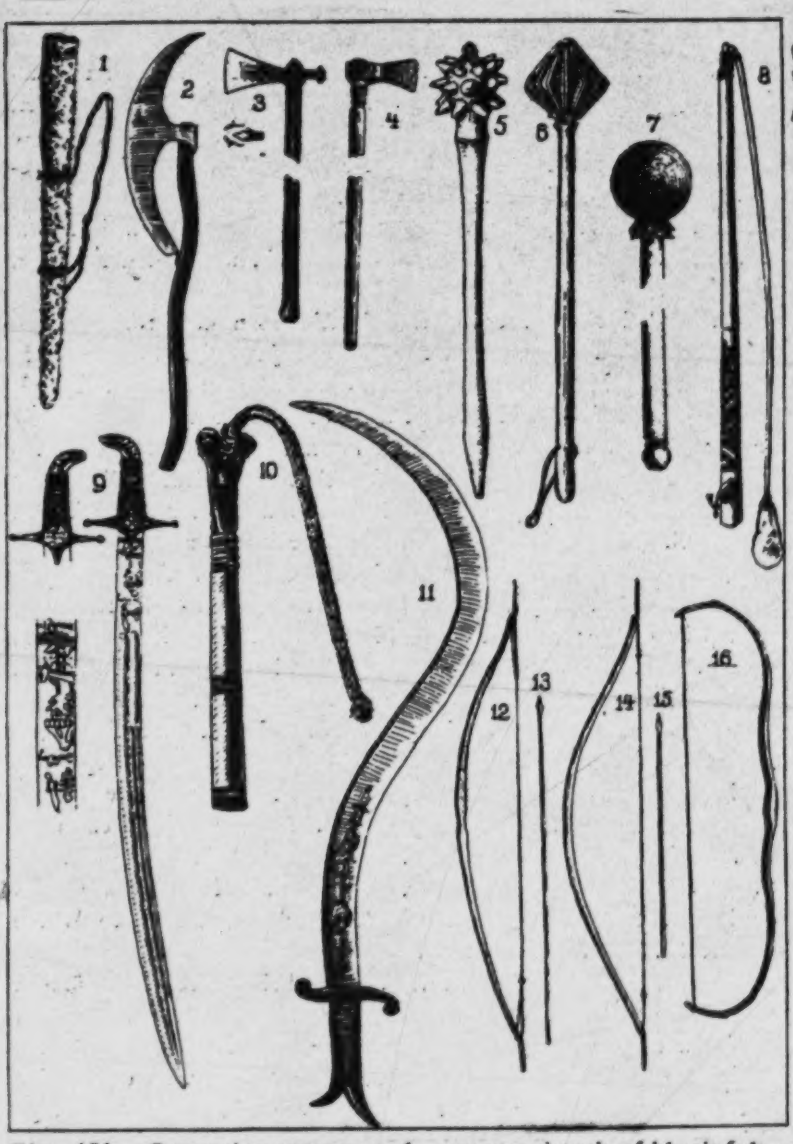


Fig. 451. Caucasian weapons: 1, weapon sheath of black felt with leather fittings; 2, 3, 4, battle-axes with iron blades and wooden stocks; 5, 6, 7, clubs with iron heads; 8, knout with handle decorated with silver; 9, sword with Georgian inscription; 10, knout with plaited leather cord; 11, saber (allegedly Armenian); 12, 14, bows with string of twisted hemp rope; 13, 15, arrows with iron points; 16, bow of horn and bone (Turkish style) (1, 1/22 nat. size; 2-4, 1/10 nat. size; 5-10, 1/7 nat. size; 9, 1/9 nat. size; 12, 14, 16, 1/16 nat. size; 13, 15, 1/15 nat. size) (From Count J. Zichy).

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[031] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[541] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special com-
[233] partment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the
[252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the
[415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is
352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some
415 of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat
• 412 stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family
585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

A [754 cont.]
for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whetstone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons hang on the walls.

Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

[755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork, plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press, barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an outside wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

[See Top of This Page--Analyst]

[757 cont.]

K 233 The Kabardin still occupy themselves principally with the raising of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses, which have Arabic blood, are taller and more powerfully built than the C 241 Abkhaz horses, and are famous for their beauty and endurance. The other Cherkess have changed over more to agriculture since the end of the fighting with the Russians.

They clear the land that they wish to seed, burn off the grass in the spring, as is also done on the pastures and meadows, and then plow and harrow with the brush-harrow [Strauchegge] (see above, p. 686 [untranslated]); until recently there was no fertilization with manure. Earlier, when the land around a village was exhausted, they merely dismantled the huts and settled in another place.

C 256 While the grain is ground in a water or horse mill, millet is husked by means of a pitted surface [Anke] (see above, p. 693 [untranslated]) and a wooden disk turned by hand, as is customary in Finland, and ground with a hand-mill by the women.

C A 231 Bees are often kept here, as in Abkhazia.

The beehives resemble those commonly used by us; they are cut out of linden bark or plaited out of willow twigs and smeared with clay and cow manure. As protection from the rain, a thick straw plaiting is laid on top. [758] Swarms that have flown out are caught with a bark cover fastened on a stick. In July and August, the hives are placed in the forests of the foothills, otherwise near the villages.

A C 462 The women have the same tasks as among the mountain peoples; among the Abkhaz, however, the men help in A C [281] the fields, fruit orchards, vineyards, and at other tasks. Among other things, the women also produce morocco leather (tsuš), A C [212] [293] from which belts, shoes, bedding, etc. are made. Besides vessels and utensils, the men carve beautiful spoons out of wood and horn, build wagons (ɣkū) with two disk-wheels that are hewn out of a single piece of wood and the axle turns with them (cf. Fig. 416 [in untranslated portion]). They used to produce their own A C [389] gunpowder, leeching the saltpeter (gin-khuš = powder-salt) for it from sheep manure. [Fig. 450 appears here.]

[758 cont.]

Silversmiths and blacksmiths are almost the only artisans; the former occupied themselves earlier with the ornamentation of weapons in particular; the latter, of whom there are two or three in every village, make dagger blades, sickles, bits for horses, horseshoes, and the like. Among the Abkhaz their profession is particularly honored and esteemed (see p. 25 , cf. Africa).

In earlier times trade was based exclusively on barter. Before the incursion of the Russians (end of the eighteenth century), the Cherkess traded salt, among other things, to the Osset, bringing it on large, two-

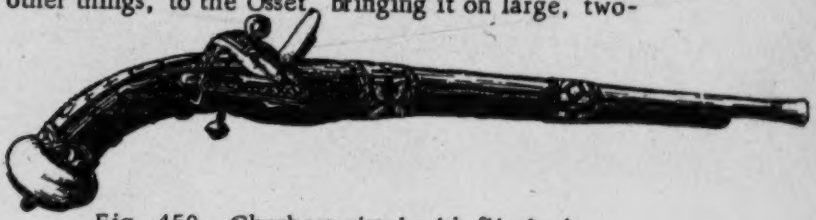


Fig. 450. Cherkess pistol with flintlock, bone pommel, and silver fittings (1/4 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

wheeled carts, drawn by six to eight oxen, from the salt-lakes along the Caspian Sea between Terek and Kuma. As products of their industry they sold principally wax, honey, skins, cloth, capes, and the like, as well as slaves. Linen material in pieces the size of a shirt served as a measure of value for all wares.

At that time the men, when not engaged in war, devoted themselves by preference to hunting and raiding. In order not to be understood by other people, and also to confuse the game, two kinds of secret language were used: the words in the one (šakobže) are completely different from the Cherkess language; in the other (faršipse) a ri or fe is inserted after every syllable.

/52 cont./

2. Ibid., p. 162.

195 of Syracuse (who lived about the middle of the fourth
764 century B.C.) said /53/ that "it is not accepted among the Colchians either to bury or to burn the corpses of men. They put these corpses in fresh animal-hides and hang them on trees. They commit to the earth the corpses of women, however, ... They venerate heaven and earth above all" (1).

1. Ibid., p. 208.

20.

Shasha

326
796 Under the name of Shasha the Abkhaz understand the inventor of the craft of the smith. They say of him, "Shasha khe ah-dou," which means, "Shasha, the great lord of trades." Shasha or Shash was the first blacksmith. He picked up the red-hot iron, not with tongs, but with his hands, and he forged it, not on an anvil, but on his knees. He is the inventor not only of the craft of the smith, but the inventor-patron of 363 other crafts as well. The smithy with all its appurtenances is the image of Shasha (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888, No. 186.

[787
796] Prayers are offered up to him on New Year's Eve, and the most complete of the ceremonies to him is held by the
● [919] blacksmiths and the locksmiths.

787
326 On New Year's Eve the master of the house kills either a calf or a ram, and his wife kills a rooster for each member of the family and prepares a pie of wheat-flour and fresh cheese. The livers and hearts of all the slaughtered animals are roasted separately; for this, instead of a spit, a stick from a young nut-tree is used. When the food is ready

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special com-
[233] partment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the
[252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the
[415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is
352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some
415 of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd
412 is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family
585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

A [754 cont.]
340 for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in
[354] the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney
tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide
A
352 bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on
which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whet-
A
412 stone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing
415 millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and
490 horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons
353 hang on the walls.

A
342 Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches, and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

A
351 [755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed
343 hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork, plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated portion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press,
A
285 barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are
245 round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

C
361 The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen], elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is
C
342 built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads
C
354 to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the
354 Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an outside wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep

A [See Top of This Page--Analyst]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

1. *Adzɔ̀rga-khwasha*

Either during the night before *baioba*, or, according to some members of the Commission, on the Wednesday evening of Passion-week, is observed the rite of binding legs with wool threads. Having supped early, the family retires to bed, each individual thrusting out his or her right leg from under the blanket. The eldest woman in the family stands on a stool in the middle of the room, and spins thread from wool. She does her work in silence. Having spun the required quantity, she quietly approaches the beds, and binds with this thread the right leg of each of their occupants, murmuring: "May God grant thee to see such days for a hundred years!" *Adzɔ̀rga* (more correctly, *adzɔ̀rga*) denotes a thick thread; *a-khwasha*—Friday, so that this rite was in former days, probably, observed on Fridays. The threads were afterwards burnt on the fire under the small cauldron in which was boiled the meat of the sacrificial animal, on Easter Day.

2. *K'wab-gharghar**

As soon as the binding ceremony was finished, the woman seized a copper cauldron, or a copper basin, and struck it like a gong, shouting at the top of her voice: "We have beaten! We have beaten!" The whole family then ran out into the garden, shouting *shwahk'wat'weyt!* "We have beaten you (outstripped)!" The "beaten" neighbours, annoyed to find themselves "beaten", immediately fell upon them, and a mock battle ensued. The battle was fought, of course, entirely as a joke, and with great merriment. In ancient times, a whole village often went to "battle" against another, beating copper cauldrons and basins. The "battle" was followed by dances and fun-making continuing till the dawn. *A-k'wab* denotes cauldron of copper, *gharghar*, knock, rap, clatter of a copper cauldron or basin.

3. *Aqat'wara*

This Abkhasian term denotes the following superstition: an Abkhaz considers it a great misfortune if he hears the warbling or chirping of a swallow or the call of a cuckoo, before he has had his breakfast (or has at any rate partaken of salt); the bird will have "beaten" him, and this he regards as a great misfortune. In order to avoid this he eats salt, or something salt-flavoured immediately on rising from bed, which means that he has won the "contest".[1]

* The labial semi-vowel "ʷ" in "*k'ʷ*", "*t'ʷ*", as also in "*kʷ*", "*tʷ*", etc., met with in this article, labializes the preceding consonant sound, the combination "*k'ʷ*", "*tʷ*", etc., representing labialized varieties of "*k'*", "*t*", etc. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Georgians also have such a superstition.

/56 cont./

579 all this is hung on trees near the place where Eyrig-aatsnykh
782 is believed to have his permanent abode.

22.

Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh

776 Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh is worshiped as the mightiest
[778] of the gods. Mt. Dudryuphsh is regarded as his abode. Those who dare to climb this mountain are immediately punished with blindness; therefore prayers and sacrifices to this deity are offered at the foot of the mountain. As a deity, Anybs-nykha has no exclusive, professional field of authority, but he is worshiped as higher and mightier than all the other gods.
[782] The arrangement of prayers and sacrifices to him is the same as to Sha-sha, with the difference that when an oath is taken in his name, the formula is "May Anybs-nykha send me blindness and every ailment . . ., "etc.

778 Anybs-nykha's residence is under the exclusive supervision of the large Abkhaz family Ankhaë-Chichba. The
[423] Chichba have enjoyed this right for several generations; it is a source of great profit to them, since permission to bring sacrifices to this deity must be bought from them with presents. Not far from the top of Mt. Dudryuphsh, the actual abode of Anybs-nykha, a stone lies under an oak; on this stone the image of the Holy Virgin has been carved. All those who
[782] take an oath must put a coin or something metal under this stone, and woe to him who is tempted to take anything away, even one little thing, from among the objects lying there!

23.

/57/ Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

782
[796] On Christmas Eve in every family chickens are killed
[262] and four kvakvari (small loaves of bread stuffed with cheese)

/12 cont./

687 426 If the blood-price was not paid within a certain period, then at the end of the year, in place of a debt of four spans, five were owed, in place of five, six, and six became seven, so that an already considerable debt increased still more and weighed like a heavy burden on the shoulders of the debtor. But the Abkhaz had one excellent custom -- that of coming to the aid of an insolvent debtor. All the latter had to do was to announce that he "owed for blood," and everybody contributed his mite to pay off the debt.

796 687 608 The following ceremony was considered the best way to a complete reconciliation of the parties involved in a blood-feud. A relative of the killer gave a banquet and, through intermediaries, invited the claimant of blood himself or his son. It was sufficient to persuade the claimant of blood to touch his lips to the breast of the wife or mother of the debtor, and, as a result of this action alone, everlasting and indissoluble peace would be restored between them. If, on the other hand, the blood-avenger would not be appeased and would not come to the feast, then those acting for the other side endeavored to abduct the son or some other close relative of the claimant or in some other way get such a person into their house. If they succeeded, then peace was restored whether the avenger liked it or not, for to kill the foster father was considered a violation and desecration of the "breast" and 186 beneath the dignity of a brave man. Love of homeland is developed to the highest degree in the Abkhaz. Some peoples say, ubi bene, ibi patria, but the Abkhaz, on the other hand, prays: "There is no better place in the world than Abkhazia. God, save Abkhazia." In both grief and happiness alike, the Abkhaz repeats this prayer.

594 As is the case with all ancient peoples, hospitality is piously honored and maintained in Abkhazia. The Abkhaz is convinced that every guest is accompanied by seven "baraka" (blessing, /13/ bliss, abundance), one of which remains with the host, and God gives back to the guest this seventh baraka. Even the poorest Abkhaz does his utmost to treat his guest as well as possible; when an Abkhaz sees a traveler going along the village

/17 cont./

342 newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one
[585] small house.

262 The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten,
[263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all re-
[888] ligious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all
[593] family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are
• 428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided
[592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than 562 462 the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes [565] toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, [535] funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men and dance with them. There have been instances of women [579] being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

562 If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the 586 Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and [692] defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

A 2 627 [771 cont.]

Law. Blood vengeance is still practiced among the Cherkess (t'li'lvasa = blood price) and Abkhaz.

A 2 [608] Formerly when a prince had struck down a peasant, his relatives could not avenge themselves on him, but rather on his foster father (cf. p. 20). The wergild was measured in "souls" according to rank, and in spans according to the size of the body; the unit of value for this was one cow (cf. p. 747 [untranslated]). A "soul" of four spans was compensated for with 30 cows, a soul of five spans with 50 cows, of six spans with 70 cows; a peasant was reckoned at five souls, a nobleman at 15 souls, a prince at 25. The wergild consisted of cows, goats, sheep, and beehives; it was increased by one span if not paid on time. If the avenger was inclined to forgivesness, he confirmed it by kissing the breast of the guilty man's mother or wife (cf. above, p. 15).

C 685 Among the Cherkess theft was expiated in the same way as among the Khevsur. The thief had to return the stolen goods and thirty oxen as well to a nobleman, and to a prince he had to replace it ninefold.

A 592 428 When there is a division of an Abkhaz kin group, the father of the house and the mother receive half of the total property; if the father is already dead, the mother receives the dowry [Mitgift] that has been brought in and [772] an equal portion from each son. The oldest son has a right of priority (ai'ab-šakhu) in division or inheritance, and likewise--as among the Osset--the youngest (eidzb-šakhu); the farm, among other things, falls to the latter, the rest being equally divided among the other children, with the daughters receiving less. Among the Cherkess the eldest son had to care for his unmarried sisters; for this he received the bride-money (see p. 16) when he had them marry.

C 593

A 782 A peculiar oath of purgation is customary among the Abkhaz; the accused strikes the anvil three times with the hammer in the smithy and says that the god of the smiths may smash his head if he is guilty. Or he goes [Fig. 452 appears here] between two loaded rifles three times and challenges the god to shoot him in the head if he is lying.

/19 cont./

844 525 the bed of the expectant mother a cord is suspended from the ceiling, which she can grasp during the severe pains and spasms of childbirth. It is indecent for her to let her moans and screams reach the ears of her parents-in-law; she must staunchly bear her sufferings so as not to lose their respect forever. At last the child is delivered. The birth of a boy brings more joy to the [842] mother than the birth of a girl, as it gives her more respect and honor in the eyes of society, but she is not particularly saddened by the birth of a daughter either, for it still serves as proof of her fertility. The newborn child is left in the care of the wet nurse [608] (the wife of the foster father), and the female relatives congratu- [853] late the new mother on the happy /20/ outcome of the delivery. The mother, too, is happy, and most of all, of course, because with the passing of the baby into the care of others she herself will soon recover and, free from caring for it, can more easily preserve her beauty and freshness of face. In a few days her husband returns and in his turn congratulates her on the delivery of her child (1).

1. Cf. the excellent article, "Abkhazia," by K. Machavariani in the newspaper Iveriia, 1884, No. 275.

608 565 On the day set for the departure of the wet nurse with the newborn baby, the parents give a banquet and give her the materials for a dress, for underwear, and for all the appurtenances for the child's cradle, a copper kettle to bathe it in, and other small articles.

From this day on the foster mother receives the honorary title of anadzdzei (nurse, foster mother), and both she and her husband, the abadzdzei (foster father), are held in universal respect; upon its entry into the house of the foster father and mother, the baby is recognized as a ward (akhupha) of the family to which the foster father belongs.

The foster parents cherish the child in due fashion and maintain him in comfort and contentment. After two or three [931] years the child is taken to its parents, along with presents consisting of one or two bulls, a goat, capons, wine, bread, etc.

/20 cont./

565 In the house of the child's parents, another banquet is held, to which
608 the neighbors are also invited. On this occasion all kinds of honors are shown to the foster mother and her husband. The foster parents are granted the right to be the first to wash their hands, and upon their return home the parents of the child must seat them on their horses, i.e., when they mount, the stirrups on the other side must be held. The foster parents return home with
[431] the child, loaded with all kinds of presents, animals, clothes, money.

The foster child remains with the foster parents during the course of eight or nine years, and then it is taken to the real parents. It hardly need be said that the child, having spent its early years in someone else's home, where it grew up and learned to walk, talk, and to love its foster mother and those surroundings, now has difficulty in adjusting itself to the new situation -- at
[154] first the father's house seems almost like a prison to him. For this reason the child is allowed to visit the foster parents frequently. If the foster child is an orphan, however, he remains in the home and under the care of his foster parents until he is married.

/21/ The foster child is obligated to defend the interests of the foster parents, i.e. of that family whose members reared him. He is required, for instance, to search for a lost article belonging to his foster parents, to find the thief and to call him to account, and it is a great disgrace to him if he is unable to do this. In the same way, if someone offends the foster parents and they are not strong enough to pay back the insult, their ward must stand up for them. Let us suppose, for instance, that some prince has beaten a peasant. In this case the ward of the injured peasant must de-
[683] mand satisfaction, not from the princely offender himself, for "his blood is unequal to that of a peasant," but from his foster parent, a peasant, and he is the one who has to answer for the insult inflicted upon the foster parent of another prince. If a peasant foster-father gets into any kind of trouble, his princely ward endeavors by hook or by crook to rescue him from his difficulties. In such cases, if the ward himself is still immature and unable to help his foster parents, then his parents act in his place.

/21 cont./

565 608 This, however, does not exhaust the role of the ward with regard to his foster parent. He is the main character in the joys and sorrows of his foster parent; in all the occasions of his life that have any importance. Thus, when his foster mother, or her [765] husband, or one of their children dies, he bewails them bitterly, dresses in mourning, lets his hair grow, buys the coffin at his own [764] expense, and takes care of the arrangements and the ceremonial for the mourning and the funeral of the deceased. When the funeral banquet is given, he provides a sheep or a horse and again arranges everything. The ward also is the main character [583] when the son of his foster mother abducts a girl to be his wife; if the relatives of the girl pursue the abductor, the princely ward comes to his aid with words and weapons and does not give up the abducted girl; subsequently he keeps her at his house until the matter is definitely settled, for none of the relatives of the abducted girl would dare to attack his home.

If, on the other hand, the marriage of the son or daughter [584] of the foster father is arranged peacefully by the voluntary consent of both sides, then here, too, the princely ward is considered the bridegroom's best man and presents the bride with money, a horse, etc.

The foster parents in turn do not fail to perform their duties with regard to their ward, whom they call their sun, their /22/ sacredness, and by whose name they swear. Every year at [431] Christmastide they give him presents, such as cheese, capons, and bread; at Easter, a lamb or a kid and "chumukhkvati." These presents are the obligatory outward signs of sincere liking and friendship on the part of lesser ones ("lower brotherhood") towards those of higher rank; with their cessation the mutual friendship is also broken off.

The sons of the foster mother are usually the bosom friends [579] and accomplices of the ward in his nocturnal thieving adventures. That is why a prince or nobleman always takes the sons of his foster mother with him on his thieving expeditions; he knows that

/51 cont./

782 one of those present begins to glorify the god: "Anchva
731 dukhva zlyphkha khkhaura!" "O you who descends from
574 heaven with lightning and ascend to heaven with thunder, who knows the number of the stars in heaven and of the sands at the bottom of the sea ..." etc., and he concludes the poem with the words, "akhdau." All those present, divided into two groups, repeat every line of the hymn in turn, always three times over.

782 The killing of one of the herd by lightning unfailingly
821 evokes prayer to Aphi; on the other hand, if he is not appeased by sacrifice, a repetition of his visit must be expected. The owner of the dead animal invites the inhabitants of the village, without distinction as to age or sex. On the spot where the animal was killed, a tower is built about one and a half sagene in height, so that beasts of prey cannot climb it. All those present surround the killed animal, join hands, and dance, half of them singing "Voetla" and the other half answering "Chaupar," and they raise the animal onto the tower, still singing and dancing, and leave it there as a victim for the birds of prey. Then the owner of the animal killed by lightning sacrifices a bull to Aphi, at the same time thanking him for the present visit and begging him nonetheless to spare him future visits. Various dishes are prepared from the meat of the sacrificed animal; bread, cheese, and wine are brought, and those present feast all day long at the expense of the man who suffered the loss. The day the animal was killed by lightning becomes so memorable in the family that has thus been visited by Aphi that neither the head of the family /52/ nor his children will give anyone anything on the anniversary of that day, saying that they expect a visit from Aphi on that day.

[527] [431]

[766] The same ceremony is performed when a person has been struck by lightning. During the dance around the corpse, none of the relatives of the dead man dares to weep; otherwise all the participants will be struck dead by a thunder-bolt.

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[28] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[231] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[241] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat. A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle. This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[269] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave out in one place, would move to another place where grass was easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple. In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass (Agrostis vulgaris).

/11 cont./

682 killed under the obligation of killing either the murderer or one of the latter's relatives. A blood-feud passes from generation to generation and is a person's sacred duty; unavenged blood is considered a shame and a disgrace for the living relatives of the person killed. The Abkhaz believe that if for some reason or other blood remains unavenged, it will avenge itself.

In case the killer himself managed to escape, a relative [628] of his was held responsible; he was killed, captured, or robbed and finally ruined. Even the killing of the meanest slave often led to clashes involving whole villages; if a mutual understanding and peace were not restored among them, the result of such a feud would be that one of the villages had to face ruin or move away to another place.

682 In blood-feuds the descent of the persons involved played 565 an important role. If, for instance, a prince killed a peasant, the relatives of the latter had no right to avenge the blood of the killed upon the killer, for "the blood of a peasant is not equal to that of a prince." Therefore, instead of the prince himself, [608] it was his foster father who had to pay for the blood shed by the prince.

There were different settlements for the blood of a peasant, a nobleman, or a prince.

Although the personal qualities of a man commanded /12/ special attention in Abkhazia the blood of a peasant was nevertheless valued lower than the blood of a nobleman, and that of the latter lower than the blood of a prince. For instance, if the blood of a peasant was valued at five human souls, then the blood of a nobleman was worth three times more, and that of a prince five times more than the blood of a peasant. The price [435] of a life was determined in terms of spans /pyad'/. A soul (person) four spans tall was valued at 30 cows or 30 rubles in silver; one of five spans, 50 cows or 50 silver rubles; and one of six spans, 70 cows or 70 rubles in silver. Arms and clothing were added as supplementary payment. Blood was paid off with cows, goats, sheep, and beehives. The number of the latter was determined on the basis of the value of a cow.

[758 cont.]

Silversmiths and blacksmiths are almost the only artisans; the former occupied themselves earlier with the ornamentation of weapons in particular; the latter, of whom there are two or three in every village, make dagger blades, sickles, bits for horses, horseshoes, and the like. Among the Abkhaz their profession is particularly honored and esteemed (see p. 25 , cf. Africa).

In earlier times trade was based exclusively on barter. Before the incursion of the Russians (end of the eighteenth century), the Cherkess traded salt, among other things, to the Osset, bringing it on large, two-

Fig. 450. Cherkess pistol with flintlock, bone pommel, and silver fittings (1/4 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

wheeled carts, drawn by six to eight oxen, from the salt-lakes along the Caspian Sea between Terek and Kuma. As products of their industry they sold principally wax, honey, skins, cloth, capes, and the like, as well as slaves. Linen material in pieces the size of a shirt served as a measure of value for all wares.

At that time the men, when not engaged in war, devoted themselves by preference to hunting and raiding. In order not to be understood by other people, and also to confuse the game, two kinds of secret language were used: the words in the one (šakobže) are completely different from the Cherkess language; in the other (faršipse) a ri or fe is inserted after every syllable.

/15 cont./

462 [281] [513] [912] •437 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter; money is not used in these cases.

433 [231] [541] The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture, cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat. A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 [556] Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle. This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it [262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave out in one place, would move to another place where grass was easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it [178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the [243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple. In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This [824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass (Agrostis vulgaris).

Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
Capital, Sukhumi; area, 3,300, population, 330,000

The Abkhaz Autonomous SSR or Abkhasia (Russian *Abkhaziya*) occupies the extreme northwestern portion of the Georgian SSR, on the southwestern slope of the Greater Caucasus, oriented toward the Black Sea. Nearly the entire population, including, in addition to the basic Abkhaz national group, Georgians, Russians, Armenians, and Greeks, is established in a narrow littoral zone between the town of Gagra and the Ingur (or Enguri) River, which forms the southeastern border of the republic. The mountain slopes are largely forested. The humid subtropical climate of the lowland makes possible the cultivation of such important crops as citrus fruits (tangerines, lemons, oranges, and grapefruit), tea, tung-wood, geranium, and other subtropical plants. The principal staple crops are corn and a high-quality tobacco, which is partly exported abroad and makes the Abkhaz Autonomous SSR one of the major tobacco-growing areas of the USSR. Lumbering is important in the forested area, and there is a large paper mill on the Ingur River. Other important power resources are the excellent coking coal of Tkvarcheli and the many mountain streams which furnish hydroelectric energy. The industry consists chiefly of sawmilling, woodworking, wine making, tobacco processing, and fruit canning and its centers are the capital, Sukhumi, Gudauta, Ochamchire, and Gagra. The Black Sea littoral is a popular climatic resort area, having numerous tourist resorts and sanatoria. The principal transportation routes are the Black Sea shore railroad, which was completed during the Second World War, and the Sukhumi military road, which leads across the Greater Caucasus at Klukhori Pass and has its terminus at Sukhumi, on the Black Sea coast.

Sukhumi, which was formerly called Sukhum, is one of the most important subtropical health resorts of the USSR. It is the center of the tobacco-growing area and has tobacco factories, distilleries, metalworks, and food-processing plants. There are tropical botanical gardens and a research institute devoted to subtropical agriculture. Near by on the Gumista River is a hydroelectric station completed after the Second World War.

Gali is an agricultural processing center in a tea and citrus-fruit district.

Tkvarcheli, which developed in the 1930's, has overtaken the older

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/15 cont./

462 [281] [513] [912] morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In 437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter; money is not used in these cases.

433 [031] [541] The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture, cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat. A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 [556] Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle. This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it [262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave out in one place, would move to another place where grass was easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it [178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the [243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple. In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This [824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass (Agrostis vulgaris).

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 462 [565]

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men and dance with them. There have been instances of women being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

[535] [579]

562 If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

586 [692]

[757 cont.]

K 233 The Kabardin still occupy themselves principally with the raising of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses, which have Arabic blood, are taller and more powerfully built than the C Abkhaz horses, and are famous for their beauty and endurance. 241 The other Cherkess have changed over more to agriculture since the end of the fighting with the Russians.

They clear the land that they wish to seed, burn off the grass in the spring, as is also done on the pastures and meadows, and then plow and harrow with the brush-harrow [Strauchegge] (see above, p. 686 [untranslated]); until recently there was no fertilization with manure. Earlier, when the land around a village was exhausted, they merely dismantled the huts and settled C in another place.

256 While the grain is ground in a water or horse mill, millet is husked by means of a pitted surface [Anke] (see above, p. 693 [untranslated]) and a wooden disk turned by hand, as is customC A ary in Finland, and ground with a hand-mill by the women.

231 Bees are often kept here, as in Abkhazia.

The beehives resemble those commonly used by us; they are cut out of linden bark or plaited out of willow twigs and smeared with clay and cow manure. As protection from the rain, a thick straw plaiting is laid on top. [758] Swarms that have flown out are caught with a bark cover fastened on a stick. In July and August, the hives are placed in the forests of the foothills, otherwise near the villages.

A C 462 The women have the same tasks as among the mountain peoples; among the Abkhaz, however, the men help in A C [281] the fields, fruit orchards, vineyards, and at other tasks. Among other things, the women also produce morocco leather (tsuš), A E [412] [493] from which belts, shoes, bedding, etc. are made. Besides vessels and utensils, the men carve beautiful spoons out of wood and horn, build wagons (ǯkū) with two disk-wheels that are hewn out of a single piece of wood and the axle turns with them (cf. Fig. 416 [in untranslated portion]). They used to produce their own A C [389] gunpowder, leeching the saltpeter (gin-khuš = powder-salt) for it from sheep manure. [Fig. 450 appears here.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

[796] sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaǩwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers [469] with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [188] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsdsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ǩwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *dishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [359] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àämen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: [539] *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nàkhak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number [106] seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head [80] of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaǩwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] ǩwa is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian [193] *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon [82] and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [191] included in both pleiades.

/23 cont./

584 is considered a mortal insult; /24/ in this case abduction is con-
[583] sidered the only way of satisfying one's injured self-esteem. But
[54] usually marriage negotiations are conducted in Abkhazia by female matchmakers or by intermediaries. If they bring the matter to a happy conclusion, their labors are rewarded with the
[465] heads and hides of the oxen that are butchered for the wedding. As soon as a mutual understanding has been reached, the bride and groom, after an exchange of presents, set a day for a meeting.

At the designated time, the groom and his friends set out, with presents, for the house of the parents of the bride. A
[583] princely groom sometimes brings as many as 20 or 30 horses, of which many are saddled. Now a feast is held at the groom's
[574] expense. During the banquet the friends of the groom, on the one hand, and those invited by the bride's parents, on the other, try in all possible ways to outdo each other in witticisms, puns, eloquence, in the amount of wine consumed, in singing, etc. The next day the comrades of the groom receive various presents and the groom himself receives a horse, or money and arms. Then the comrades return home, while the son-in-law remains in the house of the bride's parents with his delegate (dade).

But the future son-in-law still feels extremely ill at ease. According to the custom of the country, he may not yet show himself to the parents of the bride or their relatives. He is wrapped in a burka, and his head and face are wrapped in a bashlyk, under which only his eyes are barely visible. On the first night, during the feast, he hides himself somewhere outside and spends the night in a neighboring house. On the next day he is forcibly taken to the bride's house. But even now he does not dare to sit down and remains standing by the door, leaving it to his delegate to speak for him. In general it is not
[606] proper for the young son-in-law to eat with his parents-in-law, or sometimes even to sit down with them at the table. In some places, husband and wife never appear together before the wife's parents. This is considered shameful.

The bride takes up residence in a small house (amhara),

23: Shabad N-4 (no date) 1951 Rl Soviet Union Rl
Abchas RI 3

Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic
Capital, Sukhumi; area, 3,300, population, 330,000

The Abkhaz Autonomous SSR or Abkhasia (Russian *Abkhaziya*) occupies the extreme northwestern portion of the Georgian SSR, on the southwestern slope of the Greater Caucasus, oriented toward the Black Sea. Nearly the entire population, including, in addition to the basic Abkhaz national group, Georgians, Russians, Armenians, and Greeks, is established in a narrow littoral zone between the town of Gagra and the Ingur (or Enguri) River, which forms the southeastern border of the republic. The mountain slopes are largely forested. The humid subtropical climate of the lowland makes possible the cultivation of such important crops as citrus fruits (tangerines, lemons, oranges, and grapefruit), tea, tung-wood, geranium, and other subtropical plants. The principal staple crops are corn and a high-quality tobacco, which is partly exported abroad and makes the Abkhaz Autonomous SSR one of the major tobacco-growing areas of the USSR. Lumbering is important in the forested area, and there is a large paper mill on the Ingur River. Other important power resources are the excellent coking coal of Tkvarcheli and the many mountain streams which furnish hydroelectric energy. The industry consists chiefly of sawmilling, woodworking, wine making, tobacco processing, and fruit canning and its centers are the capital, Sukhumi, Gudauta, Ochamchire, and Gagra. The Black Sea littoral is a popular climatic resort area, having numerous tourist resorts and sanatoria. The principal transportation routes are the Black Sea shore railroad, which was completed during the Second World War, and the Sukhumi military road, which leads across the Greater Caucasus at Klukhori Pass and has its terminus at Sukhumi, on the Black Sea coast.

Sukhumi, which was formerly called Sukhum, is one of the most important subtropical health resorts of the USSR. It is the center of the tobacco-growing area and has tobacco factories, distilleries, metalworks, and food-processing plants. There are tropical botanical gardens and a research institute devoted to subtropical agriculture. Near by on the Gumista River is a hydroelectric station completed after the Second World War.

Gali is an agricultural processing center in a tea and citrus-fruit district.

Tkvarcheli, which developed in the 1930's, has overtaken the older

A [754 cont.]
340 for guests and, in winter, for the livestock. The hearth lies in
[354] the middle; over it hangs the kettle and sometimes a chimney
A tapering sharply at the top. Next to it stands a long, wide
352 bench, and against one wall a plank-bed made of boards, on
which are the beds and a chest. In one corner are kept the whet-
A stone, mortar stone, baskets, troughs, utensils for preparing
412 millet and maize, milk bucket, cups and spoons of wood and
415 horn, gourd containers, etc., and harnesses, saddles, and weapons
499 hang on the walls.
353

A Another type (khkwatsu) corresponds in purpose to certain
342 pile-huts on east Serbian and east Macedonian farms: they are the
sleeping huts for young married couples. They stand in the yard
near the main house, are round and plaited of hazel switches,
and the walls lean inward slightly. The roof is conical and
bound at the top with willow twigs, and the whole hut is covered
with reeds, ferns, dried weeds, and the like.

A [755] In the yard, which is surrounded by a plashed
351 hedge, there are, in addition, a summer kitchen of wickerwork,
343 plaited granaries on piles (cf. Figs. 246, 247 [in untranslated por-
tion]) for storing corncobs, a wine house with the wine press,
A barrels, baskets for the vintage, and the like. The latter are
285 round, pointed at the bottom, about 60 centimeters high and 15
245 centimeters wide; a large hook is tied on at the top so that when
the grapes are being picked it can be hung on the branches of the
tall grapevines, like our fruit basket.

C The Cherkess farmsteads likewise lie hidden in groups
361 in [Fig. 447 appears here] copses of oak, beech, elm [Ulmen],
C elm [Elmen], ash, pear, and plum trees. The dwelling is
349 built of mud bricks or wickerwork smeared with mud; the span-
roof is covered with straw that is held fast by poles, and it often
juts out in front one to one and a quarter meters as in the Balkan
and Crimean Tatar huts. The stable usually takes up one side of
the house, living space the other; a door on the long side leads
C to each of them. The interior furnishings are like those of the
352 Abkhaz house; the hearth, however, is found here at an out-
354 side wall, and the wickerwork chimney hanging over it is pear-
shaped and sticks out one and a half to two meters above the
roof. In the yard there are also a larger winter stable for sheep
[See top of this Page--Qualyst]

[758 cont.]

Silversmiths and blacksmiths are almost the only artisans; the former occupied themselves earlier with the ornamentation of weapons in particular; the latter, of whom there are two or three in every village, make dagger blades, sickles, bits for horses, horseshoes, and the like. Among the Abkhaz their profession is particularly honored and esteemed (see p. 25 , cf. Africa).

In earlier times trade was based exclusively on barter. Before the incursion of the Russians (end of the eighteenth century), the Cherkess traded salt, among other things, to the Osset, bringing it on large, two-

Fig. 450. Cherkess pistol with flintlock, bone pommel, and silver fittings (1/4 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

wheeled carts, drawn by six to eight oxen, from the salt-lakes along the Caspian Sea between Terek and Kuma. As products of their industry they sold principally wax, honey, skins, cloth, capes, and the like, as well as slaves. Linen material in pieces the size of a shirt served as a measure of value for all wares.

At that time the men, when not engaged in war, devoted themselves by preference to hunting and raiding. In order not to be understood by other people, and also to confuse the game, two kinds of secret language were used: the words in the one (šakobže) are completely different from the Cherkess language; in the other (farsipse) a ri or fe is inserted after every syllable.

[757 cont.]

K 233 The Kabardin still occupy themselves principally with the raising of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses, which have Arabic blood, are taller and more powerfully built than the C Abkhaz horses, and are famous for their beauty and endurance. 241 The other Cherkess have changed over more to agriculture since the end of the fighting with the Russians.

They clear the land that they wish to seed, burn off the grass in the spring, as is also done on the pastures and meadows, and then plow and harrow with the brush-harrow [Strauchegge] (see above, p. 686 [untranslated]); until recently there was no fertilization with manure. Earlier, when the land around a village was exhausted, they merely dismantled the huts and settled in another place.

C 256 While the grain is ground in a water or horse mill, millet is husked by means of a pitted surface [Anke] (see above, p. 693 [untranslated]) and a wooden disk turned by hand, as is customary in Finland, and ground with a hand-mill by the women.

C A 231 Bees are often kept here, as in Abkhazia.

The beehives resemble those commonly used by us; they are cut out of linden bark or plaited out of willow twigs and smeared with clay and cow manure. As protection from the rain, a thick straw plaiting is laid on top. [758] Swarms that have flown out are caught with a bark cover fastened on a stick. In July and August, the hives are placed in the forests of the foothills, otherwise near the villages.

A C 462 The women have the same tasks as among the mountain peoples; among the Abkhaz, however, the men help in A the fields, fruit orchards, vineyards, and at other tasks. Among [281] other things, the women also produce morocco leather (tsuš), E from which belts, shoes, bedding, etc. are made. Besides ves- [417] sels and utensils, the men carve beautiful spoons out of wood and [293] horn, build wagons (ǯkū) with two disk-wheels that are hewn out of a single piece of wood and the axle turns with them (cf. Fig. 416 [in untranslated portion]). They used to produce their own A gunpowder, leeching the saltpeter (gin-khuš = powder-salt) for [389] it from sheep manure. [Fig. 450 appears here.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaĥwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; *dsdsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ĥwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the house, *dishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *dămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwdyt'ar! bzhyə-nəkhak zəndə-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[1] *Alaĥwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *hna* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Àyt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *Aa*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Àyt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are included in both pleiades.

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
433 cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[231] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
[541] beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/13 cont./

574 road in the evening, he immediately greets him, "bziala vahbeit" -- "it is good to see you!" Then he invites the traveler into his house; "Come in and rest, where are you going now? Spend the night in our house, and early in the morning go your way." If the traveler, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, accepts the invitation and puts up at the host's house, he receives a warm reception and is wonderfully well regaled. And if the traveler does not accept the invitation, he replies, "ubeikht" (grow rich, thank you) and continues on his way. The custom of hospitality protects the traveler even from blood-vengeance. Once he is someone's guest, no one has the right to touch him.

181 888 Along with his hospitality and generosity, the Abkhaz is also courteous, polite, and respectful, especially to older persons. Here are a few examples.

• 515 576 [264] Before taking any food the Abkhaz usually wash their hands. But the washing is performed in order of seniority, the ablution of the hands beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest of those attending the banquet. The same order is observed in drinking wine. But on such occasions the oldest person does not lag behind either. In the beginning he renounces his right of priority and invites the person next in rank to drink wine or to wash his hands first. This is required by the custom of courtesy and politeness. But, of course, the younger person flatly refuses the honor offered him. Finally, after many mutual compliments and words of persuasion, the first one (the oldest) accepts the invitation after all. Then the same ceremony is gone through between the second and the third, the third and the fourth, and so on, down to the youngest person attending. Furthermore, while the oldest persons are washing their hands, the younger ones are obliged to remain standing. Here again there is ceremony, exhortations for them to sit down, but if those who are urged to do so ignore these exhortations and continue to stand, then the older person considers it improper to
576 wash his hands sitting down, and he also stands up. The question of which of two persons shall first cross the threshold and

/41 cont./

515 782 823 [783] Fearing to defile it, the Abkhaz avoids bathing in running water; if he bathes, upon coming out /42/ of the water he takes three stones and says, "I sinned against you today; I went into the water and bathed, but you, forgive me." With this prayer, he passes the pebbles around his head with his hands and throws them into the water.

3.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Rainbow

753 [755] [782] [821] The ceremony in honor of the rainbow, which is not obligatory for all, is performed for the greater part on persons whose sickness, according to the female fortune-teller, is caused by the rainbow. A prolonged yellowness of the face, a weakening of the organism, instability of character -- the Abkhaz attributes all these to the fact that the sick person entered water at the very moment when the rainbow was drinking from it.

755 782 "Sinless" old women, having planned a sacrifice and promised a prayer, lead the sick person out to a brook; they take with them two fried capons, two stuffed loaves of unleavened bread in the shape of a tongue, and other provisions, as in the performance of the ceremony in honor of the water. On both sides of the brook, clean objects are laid out, such as clothes, silver, etc., a little bridge made of thread is thrown over the river from one bank to another. Having prepared all this, the praying-woman, with a doll that has been prepared beforehand in her hands, walks around the sick person, who is kneeling down covered with a piece of calico, and prays for him to the rainbow, known by the name Eliaphshi; then she takes a candle and addresses a similar prayer to the "Mistress Mother of the Water," and her "lord husband." After praying over the provisions she takes some [789] of each dish and throws it into the water; she places the doll in a pumpkin, and, after adorning the latter with lighted

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

their enemies, the god ordered the bird *aqaqab* to watch over them; the Megrelians who have the same belief, call this bird *kakabi*.[1] As soon as this bird sights at a distance a hunter or some other enemy, it soars high up into the sky, and by screeching warns the game of the approach of danger. That is why this bird is always found near the beasts.

The god of the mountains demands respect. He punishes severely those bold enough to bathe in clear, transparent mountain streams. The Abkhaz shepherds do not, therefore, bathe in these streams, being afraid of drawing upon themselves the displeasure of the god of the mountains: the nude body is said to defile the waters of the mountain spirit.

3. *Azhwèyp'shaă* (gods of beasts and hunting)[2]

Azhwèyp'shaă are gods of beasts and of hunting. They dwell in impassable forests, and lead an ordinary family life. To them are subjected all game, and without their will no one can shoot bird or beast. These gods kill for themselves some wild animal, boil and eat its meat; they wrap the bones in its skin and then revive the animal by striking it with a wand. Only after an animal has been resurrected in this way is a hunter granted the right to shoot it, and then only the particular hunter for whom the gods have destined it: no one else, try as much as he will, can kill it. Of this the Abkhasians are aware, and they employ the following characteristic greeting when they encounter a fellow hunter: *zp'sà-aakhèw yùzp'shùr*, "Which is destined to die, that (animal) is waiting for thee!" the answer being, "For both of us is waiting!"

A few words may be said about the way in which Abkhasians divine the success or failure of their hunting on the day of the Assumption. Before starting out the hunter takes a sharp knife and repeatedly strikes the table, cutting nicks in it. Passing his palm over the table, he says: "Whether thou sayest fifteen, whether I say fifteen, whoever says fifteen (it will be) thirty, fifteen." If the nicks thus cut number exactly fifteen it is a good omen; the gods will reward him with game.

The Abkhasians learnt this method in the following manner. A hunter once followed a wild goat, but he could not shoot it. It led him into the thick of a wood, where he saw a huge cauldron, around which sat gods. They invited him to join them. Nearby stood a goat. They killed the latter and invited the hunter to partake of the meal. When the gods began to throw bones into the hide, the hunter concealed one of them, putting in its place a small stick (or a small knife,

[1] The word is consonant with the Georgian *Kakabi*, partridge.
[2] The term is construed as plural.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

who transgress against him. In order to avoid incurring the anger of this god, an Abkhaz will not draw water or wash himself when the rainbow is in the sky, and is generally careful about the use of water. Like any other god, *Atswaqwa* may bestow the " warmth of his eyes and his heart ", in return for offerings and prayers. Whoever is affected by his wrath, grows icteritious, emaciated, to save his life he must, at the direction of the sorceresses, make the following offering to the rainbow god :—

On one of the Thursdays [1] the old (" pure ") women take the sick person to the river, pass (Geo. *shemoavleben*) around his head 4–5 yards of variegated chintz, and pray : " The great god ! Acknowledging his transgressions this sick person (the name is mentioned) has appeared before thee, and humbly entreats thee to accept this chintz as a pledge that he will perform the established offering at the proper time, at the direction of the sorceresses ! "

On the following Thursday he is taken again to the same river and place. Usually three women say the prayer, but there may be seven. Men, with the exception of the patient, are not allowed to be present at this ceremony. The sick person is dressed entirely in white. The eldest woman [2] kills a capon and a hen ; women carry out all the duties, preparing *ashwamkyd'*, " *ghomi* " (millet pudding), *akwakwdr*, and *atcha-gvazdl* (Geo. *ghvezeli*, an oblong bread), of each of which there must be seven of the usual, and seven of the very small size. All these are placed on *ashwamkyd'*, on which also burn seven wax candles. The prayer is said by the eldest woman. The patient kneels in front of the offering ; he is taken home immediately the ceremony is over, and he must not look back. The seven small *akwakwdr*, *atcha-gvazdl*, and seven small portions of *ghomi* (*abòst'a*—millet porridge), are thrown into the water ; they represent the share of the female slaves (*ahl'ap'hwòs*) of the rainbow god. Everything else is consumed by the women themselves ; the remains being thrown into the river, for nothing must be taken home.

Muhammadans must also burn candles at this offering. The candles are fixed on a kind of hoop made of grape vine. At the end of the ceremony the hoop with the burning candles is thrown into the river.

It should be noted that in some parts of the country this god is called *Atswaqwa-òlia* (the Rainbow-Eliah). So at least he was called, according to the testimony of D. I. Gulia, by Javaz, the famous woman supplicant.

[1] Thursday in Megrelian is *tsaskhAs*, the day of the sky. It is noteworthy that the Abkhasians perform usually on the day of the sky, the majority of rites that are seemingly connected with the sky, as in the case given.

[2] The Abkhasian women kill animals only on occasions of certain offerings.

2: Byhan--2 E-4 (no date) 1926 RI3 Abkhaz RI3

[750]

142
091
308
516

Fig. 441. Abkhaz (From Count J. Zichy)

/13 cont./

576 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a [608] [755] long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge mtsuge seizgat," i.e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging 181 the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children [565] of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, [411] dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the [293] constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

•526 Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games [541] are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 538 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

/24 cont./

584 from which she does not emerge until a feast is held in the big house. Then she is led into the house, and one of the elderly friends of the family, or the father himself, puts a piece of liver on a spit and begins to pray and to express wishes that the couple before him may be happy, prolific, etc.

When the groom returns from the house of his bride's parents to that of his father, he again is not allowed to show himself to his parents and older relatives. This, too, would be considered /25/ indecent. He does not appear until after the feast has been given by his father. Now the same blessings and wishes that were given when the bride was led out of her amhara are repeated, and the groom gives presents to his mother, father, uncle, foster father, and in general to all older relatives. This feast bears the name aphkhasharkhe (portion of shame, remover of shame).

585 After the preparation of the dowry, the bride's parents
[583] invite their future son-in-law in order to entrust their daughter to him; at the appointed time the groom comes to get her with his friends and her girl-friends. On the way home with the bride,
[533] the marriage song bedniera (happiness) is sung, there is trick-
[526] riding on horses, pistol-shooting, etc. When they are approaching the house of the groom, they send someone ahead to announce the arrival of the bride to the groom's father and mother. Such a messenger stops somewhere near the gates of the house and
[202] without a word fires a pistol in the air. In the house he is offered some honey or sugar.

Meanwhile the wedding procession reaches the house. Here the friends and girl-friends amuse themselves for a while with a huge round loaf of wheaten bread, throwing it three times over the bride and over the house and breaking it into pieces, which are picked up by those present. After this the bride is led into the house, at the entrance of which two men hold swords crossed overhead. At the threshold she is offered honey or sugar, with the words, "May God give you a tongue as sweet." After the bride enters the house she is handed a cup filled with grains of gomi, on top of which an egg has been placed. Then she is led three times around the hearth while she scatters the grains of gomi. The bride is then seated, and they hand her a little boy

/30 cont./

765 526 After the meal, the dzhiriti takes place, reminiscent of the tournaments of the Middle Ages. Now the fair sex occupies the passageway near the house. Young men on horseback assemble in front of the beauties and vie with each other in attempts to display their wit, inventiveness, and knowledge in speeches, and their bravery in the dzhigitovka /trick-riding/ which will follow.

The main dzhigitovka, tarchei /see foreign text/, consists of the following. One of the competing riders accepts from the host of the feast /31/ or from one of the beauties some strips of chintz, a small sewn boot, a rosary of chestnuts, or something else, and, holding this tarchei in his hand, he gallops ahead with it while the other lads pursue him and try to catch him and take away the tarchei. If someone is successful in this, the tarchei passes into the hands of the one who has taken it away from the first rider; then that one races off, and the others again chase after him. The one who escapes capture and manages to bring the tarchei back to the place where the competition started is the winner. The horsemen's competition does not end with this, however; they continue to prance around on horseback, pick up money from the ground at full gallop, etc.

765 541 Sometimes there are also horse-races at the mourning banquet. Children of eight to nine years of age are horsemen. A goal is pointed out to the competitors, and the first one to reach it wins something. In this case, the hosts present the winners with the horse of the deceased, with some animal, or with a khak (arshin or span) of chintz.

VI.

Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz

771 "Up to the year 1867," wrote Mr. A. in his excellent article on the Abkhaz, "the religious situation among the Abkhaz was absurd in the extreme. One found there the rites of all religious doctrines, from fetishism to Christianity. These people had no precise conception of any religion, but adopted from all of them

[772 cont.]

C 533 Art and play. The old traditions of the past and of the deeds of the Cherkess were preserved by the wandering minstrels (gegwako); they used to sing of them at feasts and festivals, whereas nowadays they present hardly anything but songs of congratulation and praise and comic songs. A 538 As far as is known, the folk literature of the Abkhaz is rich in religious and festive songs and prayer formulas, and probably also in heroic and other

A [534]

Fig. 452. Guitar with two strings, Abkhaz (1/7 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A 534 songs. As accompaniment to the singing, a two or three-stringed guitar is used (Abkhaz, ap'khirtsa, see Fig. 452) or the Mingrel lute (atšangur), the handle of which is sometimes carved or shaped in the form of a head. In addition, the C 534 Cherkess still use long flutes (tšebizga) of reed or metal, with three finger-holes, and triangular harps (pšine-duk-okyo), which also occur among the Swan; they are 20 to 70 centimeters wide and have 40-centimeter-long hair strings attached to the resonator and to pegs above.

A 535 The favorite dance among the Abkhaz is the "shoulder-dance," in which the young people hold each other by the hand, [773] turn around as they sing, and from time to time leap in C 535 the air. Among the Cherkess there were girls' dances (denyola), in which they hopped in one place, round dances of men and girls (uk) combined with singing, and wild war-dances (kofa) performed by a single fully-armed man.

A ● 536 The principal amusements of the men are contests of strength, stone-casting, ball-throwing, and the like. The Abkhaz used to fight duels with the sword, usually while sitting

A 526 [773 cont.]
on horseback, or they would arrange javelin battles in which, divided into two companies, they rode against one another, threw long, white sticks (džerid) at one another, and caught them in flight or picked them up from the ground (cf. p. 715 [untranslated]).

c) The Chechen and Lezgin

C 131 The territory of the Chechen takes in the forested northern slope of the mountain range that branches off from the main chain from Tebulos and Diklos toward the northeast and separates Chechnya from Dagestan, and the flatland lying in front up to the Terek. C. 101 Their neighbors to the east are the Kymyk [Kumyk], to the north the Cossacks, to the west the Kabardin and Osset, to the south the Khevsur, Tush, and Lezgin. The western tribe, the Ingush, are partly cut off by a strip of Russian settlement between Vladikavkaz and Grosniy, as are the Chechen between Grosniy and Mozdok, who were settled on the Terek in 1866.

D 131 [133] The Lezgin inhabit nearly treeless, barren Dagestan [774] (= mountain country), which extends southeast of the above-mentioned mountain range up to the Baba-dagh north of Shemakha, that is, the river districts of the Samur, the Ruba, and D 101 the upper Sulak. Their neighbors to the east on the Caspian coastal plain are the Azerbaijani, Tatars, and the Kymyk, to the northwest the Chechen, to the west the Tush, to the southwest the Kakhetian Georgians, to the south the Azerbaijani, Tatars, and the Tat. [Fig. 453 appears here.]

C 105 648 The Georgian, Persian, Armenian, and Arabic authors report nothing about the origin of these two linguistically, but not culturally, different peoples. It is known only that since the time of Genghis Khan Mongolian and Tatar legions have been continually oppressing the Chechen and have held them subject in part until their power was broken by the Russians. They themC 173 selves give Nakhashé on the upper Argun as the tribal home of all the Chechen, and their name Nakhchuy comes from it. Popular legends speak of a man from the high Caucasus, of an Arab, and

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZha

small salt *akwakwər*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Làmilakh* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Làmilakh* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwər* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyəbir* (in Geo. *riktap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abaia*.

[1] *Anasp'a dzw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dzedzola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-satskhela*. The word *a-bala*, in Abkhasian *a-mərtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik tsdbl*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwza-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwza-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nəhwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nəhwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nəhwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nəhwa* (*anəhwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateypa, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

/51 cont./

782 one of those present begins to glorify the god: "Anchva
731 dukhva zlyphkha khkhaura!" "O you who descends from
574 heaven with lightning and ascend to heaven with thunder, who knows the number of the stars in heaven and of the sands at the bottom of the sea ..." etc., and he concludes the poem with the words, "akhdau." All those present, divided into two groups, repeat every line of the hymn in turn, always three times over.

782 The killing of one of the herd by lightning unfailingly
821 evokes prayer to Aphi; on the other hand, if he is not appeased by sacrifice, a repetition of his visit must be expected. The owner of the dead animal invites the inhabitants of the village, without distinction as to age or sex. On the spot where the animal was killed, a tower is built about one and a half sagene in height, so that beasts of prey cannot climb it. All those present surround the killed animal, join hands, and dance, half of them singing "Voetla" and the other half answering "Chaupar," and they raise the animal onto the tower, still singing and dancing, and leave it there as a victim for the birds of prey. Then the owner of the animal killed by lightning sacrifices a bull to Aphi, at the same time thanking him for the present visit and begging him nonetheless to spare him future visits. Various dishes are prepared from the meat of the sacrificed animal; bread, cheese, and wine are brought, and those present feast all day long at the expense of the man who suffered the loss. The day the animal was killed by lightning becomes so memorable in the family that has thus been visited by Aphi that

[529] neither the head of the family /52/ nor his children will give
[431] anyone anything on the anniversary of that day, saying that they expect a visit from Aphi on that day.

[766] The same ceremony is performed when a person has been struck by lightning. During the dance around the corpse, none of the relatives of the dead man dares to weep; otherwise all the participants will be struck dead by a thunder-bolt.

23: Shabad N-4 (no date) 1951 Rl Soviet Union Rl
Abchas Rl 3

ABKHAZ AUTONOMOUS SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC
Capital, Sukhumi; area, 3,300, population, 330,000

The Abkhaz Autonomous SSR or Abkhasia (Russian *Abkhaziya*) occupies the extreme northwestern portion of the Georgian SSR, on the southwestern slope of the Greater Caucasus, oriented toward the Black Sea. Nearly the entire population, including, in addition to the basic Abkhaz national group, Georgians, Russians, Armenians, and Greeks, is established in a narrow littoral zone between the town of Gagra and the Ingur (or Enguri) River, which forms the southeastern border of the republic. The mountain slopes are largely forested. The humid subtropical climate of the lowland makes possible the cultivation of such important crops as citrus fruits (tangerines, lemons, oranges, and grapefruit), tea, tung-wood, geranium, and other subtropical plants. The principal staple crops are corn and a high-quality tobacco, which is partly exported abroad and makes the Abkhaz Autonomous SSR one of the major tobacco-growing areas of the USSR. Lumbering is important in the forested area, and there is a large paper mill on the Ingur River. Other important power resources are the excellent coking coal of Tkvarcheli and the many mountain streams which furnish hydroelectric energy. The industry consists chiefly of sawmilling, woodworking, wine making, tobacco processing, and fruit canning and its centers are the capital, Sukhumi, Gudauta, Ochamchire, and Gagra. The Black Sea littoral is a popular climatic resort area, having numerous tourist resorts and sanatoria. The principal transportation routes are the Black Sea shore railroad, which was completed during the Second World War, and the Sukhumi military road, which leads across the Greater Caucasus at Klukhori Pass and has its terminus at Sukhumi, on the Black Sea coast.

Sukhumi, which was formerly called Sukhum, is one of the most important subtropical health resorts of the USSR. It is the center of the tobacco-growing area and has tobacco factories, distilleries, metalworks, and food-processing plants. There are tropical botanical gardens and a research institute devoted to subtropical agriculture. Near by on the Gumista River is a hydroelectric station completed after the Second World War.

Gali is an agricultural processing center in a tea and citrus-fruit district.

Tkvarcheli, which developed in the 1930's, has overtaken the older

/38 cont./

782 unable to perform that act because of his sickness, he then
755 presents something as a pledge, saying, "If you (God) are
753 sending this (sickness) because of my guilt, then relieve me; I shall pray to you as is fitting and as the sorcerer will instruct me." But when he does not know which deity is angry and is causing his sickness, he says, "No matter what caused this illness, I shall do whatever the sorcerers may recommend." The pledge is specially set aside as a sacred object until his vow is fulfilled. The performers of prayers during such religious rituals are men or women, depending upon the sex of the deity in whose honor the ceremony is performed.

I shall proceed to a description of the ceremonies themselves.

1.

/39/

782
755 The Ceremony in Honor of Mother Earth

A sinless woman, taking six nuts and a few grains of millet, leads the sick one to an alder tree. Here she carries the three nuts and several grains of millet around the tree in the name of the earth; then she does the same thing around a nut-tree (walnut) in the name of Adabna, begging him to have pity on the sick person. She then makes
● [532] [789] a richly-dressed doll in the image of a man, buries it in the earth for the "liberation" of the sick person, and says, "Play and amuse yourself with this instead of with the sick one." After this, a large millet-loaf is baked -- "the bread of Mother Earth" -- and two other long loaves of bread for Adabna. The same woman takes a piece from each of the four sides of the first loaf, both the loaves in honor of Adabna, a candle, and incense, and with the sick person goes to the crossing of three roads, where she places the pieces of the millet-loaf at one road, the two loaves of Adabna at the second, and at the third she lights the candles and places chevyaki (shoes) there, saying: "Mistress Earth, these are your shoes!" She then places the sick person on his knees

/18 cont./

III.

Education -- The Educated -- The Educators

565 While the upper class in Abkhazia enjoyed privilege and
566 power, the situation of the lower classes was one of great oppression; /19/ the batoni (master, feudal lord) looked upon his subject, his slave, as a commodity; he could sell or pawn him
[567] according to circumstances. However, even after the abolition
[579] of slavery, the position of the peasantry did not improve, due to the fact that the nobility did not cease from robbery and pillage and plunder until the most recent times.

565 Under such a state of affairs, all the peasantry could do
608 was to resign itself to feudal conditions and try, wherever possible, to get protection. The best method lay in the custom of adoption, or the rearing of the sons of the aristocrats by the peasants. Thanks to this custom, the aristocrats themselves were strengthened, for in this way they gained in the peasants their most faithful supporters, while at the same time freeing their wives from the onerous duty of bringing up and feeding their own children. This is the reason that in all Abkhazia there is not a single peasant who has not reared one or several princes and nobles; as a consequence of this custom, hardly one per cent of the nobles have been nursed at their own mother's breast.

Before the beginning of childbirth in a family of the aristocracy (didebuli), on the one hand relatives and acquaintances and, on the other hand, the future foster-mothers of the expected child, accompanied by their husbands and female relatives in order to be able to bear the newborn foster-child back to their village with due ceremony, begin to gather around the pregnant
844 woman. During the childbirth, girls from the village also come to
565 visit the expectant mother in order to distract her and to relieve
[533] her sufferings during labor with gay songs and the telling of fables
[538] and fairy tales. The husband is absent during this time. According to the customs of the country, he is not allowed to be present when his wife gives birth and therefore leaves the home. Above

/24 cont./

584 from which she does not emerge until a feast is held in the big house. Then she is led into the house, and one of the elderly friends of the family, or the father himself, puts a piece of liver on a spit and begins to pray and to express wishes that the couple before him may be happy, prolific, etc.

When the groom returns from the house of his bride's parents to that of his father, he again is not allowed to show himself to his parents and older relatives. This, too, would be considered /25/ indecent. He does not appear until after the feast has been given by his father. Now the same blessings and wishes that were given when the bride was led out of her amhara are repeated, and the groom gives presents to his mother, father, uncle, foster father, and in general to all older relatives. This feast bears the name aphkhasharkhe (portion of shame, remover of shame).

585 After the preparation of the dowry, the bride's parents
[583] invite their future son-in-law in order to entrust their daughter to him; at the appointed time the groom comes to get her with his friends and her girl-friends. On the way home with the bride,
[533] the marriage song bedniera (happiness) is sung, there is trick-
[526] riding on horses, pistol-shooting, etc. When they are approaching the house of the groom, they send someone ahead to announce the arrival of the bride to the groom's father and mother. Such a messenger stops somewhere near the gates of the house and
[202] without a word fires a pistol in the air. In the house he is offered some honey or sugar.

Meanwhile the wedding procession reaches the house. Here the friends and girl-friends amuse themselves for a while with a huge round loaf of wheaten bread, throwing it three times over the bride and over the house and breaking it into pieces, which are picked up by those present. After this the bride is led into the house, at the entrance of which two men hold swords crossed overhead. At the threshold she is offered honey or sugar, with the words, "May God give you a tongue as sweet." After the bride enters the house she is handed a cup filled with grains of gomi, on top of which an egg has been placed. Then she is led three times around the hearth while she scatters the grains of gomi. The bride is then seated, and they hand her a little boy

/31 cont./

771 whatever stood out most sharply and acted most strongly upon their almost childish imagination" (1). Madame Giorgidze says: "At

1. See Sborn. sved. o kavk. gorts., No. V.

present the majority of the Abkhaz profess the Christian religion, the minority Mohammedan. In spite of this, the Abkhaz is little informed in either of the two religions and is really a heathen rather than Christian or Moslem" (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888.

1.

775 766 The Souls of the Dead -- Their Wanderings on Earth

The Abkhaz believes that human life does not end with earthly existence, but that it continues after death, /32/ or, in the words of the Abkhaz, "on the other side." He believes, in addition, that this life beyond the grave continues at the very place where the deceased is buried. It is not enough, therefore, to take a drowned body out of the river to bury it, for the soul of the deceased must also be evoked from the water and brought into the grave in which the body of the drowned man is buried. This is the ceremony of the evocation and capture of a drowned person's soul. Men and women gather on both sides of the river from which the corpse of the drowned man has been recovered. Across the river, from one bank to the other, a silk thread is stretched, from which a leather knapsack is hung, its lower end almost touching the water. The men and women then begin to the sound of the balalaika. The Abkhaz is convinced that the soul of the dead leaves the water and enters the knapsack when it hears the sounds of the balalaika and the singing. When the Abkhaz think that the soul has entered the bag, one of the men jumps into the water and ties it up. They then carry the

[534] [533]

/50 cont./

782 233 [796] On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder- [562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

782 731 789 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre- [533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva rysshva and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also [821] during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second, to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one 782 731 574 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, reminding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/31 cont./

771 whatever stood out most sharply and acted most strongly upon their almost childish imagination" (1). Madame Giorgidze says: "At

1. See Sborn. sved. o kavk. gorts., No. V.

present the majority of the Abkhaz profess the Christian religion, the minority Mohammedan. In spite of this, the Abkhaz is little informed in either of the two religions and is really a heathen rather than Christian or Moslem" (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888.

1.

775 766 The Souls of the Dead -- Their Wanderings on Earth

The Abkhaz believes that human life does not end with earthly existence, but that it continues after death, /32/ or, in the words of the Abkhaz, "on the other side." He believes, in addition, that this life beyond the grave continues at the very place where the deceased is buried. It is not enough, therefore, to take a drowned body out of the river to bury it, for the soul of the deceased must also be evoked from the water and brought into the grave in which the body of the drowned man is buried. This is the ceremony of the evocation and capture of a drowned person's soul. Men and women gather on both sides of the river from which the corpse of the drowned man has been recovered. Across the river, from one bank to the other, a silk thread is stretched, from which a leather knapsack is hung, its lower end almost touching the water. The men and women then begin to the sound of the balalaika. The Abkhaz is convinced that the soul of the dead leaves the water and enters the knapsack when it hears the sounds of the balalaika and the singing. When the Abkhaz think that the soul has entered the bag, one of the men jumps into the water and ties it up. They then carry the

[534] [533]

[772 cont.]

C 533 Art and play. The old traditions of the past and of the deeds of the Cherkess were preserved by the wandering minstrels (gegwako); they used to sing of them at feasts and festivals, whereas nowadays they present hardly anything but songs of congratulation and praise and comic songs. As far as is known, the A 538 folk literature of the Abkhaz is rich in religious and festive songs and prayer formulas, and probably also in heroic and other

A [534]

Fig. 452. Guitar with two strings, Abkhaz (1/7 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A 534 songs. As accompaniment to the singing, a two or three-stringed guitar is used (Abkhaz, ap'khirtsa, see Fig. 452) or the Mingrel lute (atšangur), the handle of which is sometimes carved or shaped in the form of a head. In addition, the C 534 Cherkess still use long flutes (tšebizga) of reed or metal, with three finger-holes, and triangular harps (pšine-duk-okyo), which also occur among the Swan; they are 20 to 70 centimeters wide and have 40-centimeter-long hair strings attached to the resonator and to pegs above.

A 535 The favorite dance among the Abkhaz is the "shoulder-dance," in which the young people hold each other by the hand, [773] turn around as they sing, and from time to time leap in C 535 the air. Among the Cherkess there were girls' dances (denyola), in which they hopped in one place, round dances of men and girls (uk) combined with singing, and wild war-dances (kofa) performed by a single fully-armed man.

A 536 The principal amusements of the men are contests of strength, stone-casting, ball-throwing, and the like. The Abkhaz used to fight duels with the sword, usually while sitting

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 462 [565]

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, [535] funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men and dance with them. There have been instances of women [579] being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

562 586 [692]

562 If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

[772 cont.]

C 533 Art and play. The old traditions of the past and of the deeds of the Cherkess were preserved by the wandering minstrels (gegwako); they used to sing of them at feasts and festivals, whereas nowadays they present hardly anything but songs of congratulation and praise and comic songs. As far as is known, the A 538 folk literature of the Abkhaz is rich in religious and festive songs and prayer formulas, and probably also in heroic and other

A [534]

Fig. 452. Guitar with two strings, Abkhaz (1/7 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A 534 songs. As accompaniment to the singing, a two or three-stringed guitar is used (Abkhaz, ap'khirtsa, see Fig. 452) or the Mingrel lute (atšangur), the handle of which is sometimes carved or shaped in the form of a head. In addition, the C 534 Cherkess still use long flutes (tšebizga) of reed or metal, with three finger-holes, and triangular harps (pšine-duk-okyo), which also occur among the Swan; they are 20 to 70 centimeters wide and have 40-centimeter-long hair strings attached to the resonator and to pegs above.

A ● 535 The favorite dance among the Abkhaz is the "shoulder-dance," in which the young people hold each other by the hand, [773] turn around as they sing, and from time to time leap in C 535 the air. Among the Cherkess there were girls' dances (denyola), in which they hopped in one place, round dances of men and girls (uk) combined with singing, and wild war-dances (kofa) performed by a single fully-armed man.

A 526 The principal amusements of the men are contests of strength, stone-casting, ball-throwing, and the like. The Abkhaz used to fight duels with the sword, usually while sitting

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Alzvibzha

1. *Adzɔrga-khwasha*

Either during the night before *baioba*, or, according to some members of the Commission, on the Wednesday evening of Passion-week, is observed the rite of binding legs with wool threads. Having supped early, the family retires to bed, each individual thrusting out his or her right leg from under the blanket. The eldest woman in the family stands on a stool in the middle of the room, and spins thread from wool. She does her work in silence. Having spun the required quantity, she quietly approaches the beds, and binds with this thread the right leg of each of their occupants, murmuring: "May God grant thee to see such days for a hundred years!" *Adzɔrga* (more correctly, *adzɔga*) denotes a thick thread; *a-khwasha*—Friday, so that this rite was in former days, probably, observed on Fridays. The threads were afterwards burnt on the fire under the small cauldron in which was boiled the meat of the sacrificial animal, on Easter Day.

2. *K'wab-gharghar**

As soon as the binding ceremony was finished, the woman seized a copper cauldron, or a copper basin, and struck it like a gong, shouting at the top of her voice: "We have beaten! We have beaten!" The whole family then ran out into the garden, shouting *shwakh'wat'weyt!* "We have beaten you (outstripped)!" The "beaten" neighbours, annoyed to find themselves "beaten", immediately fell upon them, and a mock battle ensued. The battle was fought, of course, entirely as a joke, and with great merriment. In ancient times, a whole village often went to "battle" against another, beating copper cauldrons and basins. The "battle" was followed by dances and fun-making continuing till the dawn. *A-k'wab* denotes cauldron of copper, *gharghar*, knock, rap, clatter of a copper cauldron or basin.

3. *Aqat'wara*

This Abkhasian term denotes the following superstition: an Abkhaz considers it a great misfortune if he hears the warbling or chirping of a swallow or the call of a cuckoo, before he has had his breakfast (or has at any rate partaken of salt); the bird will have "beaten" him, and this he regards as a great misfortune. In order to avoid this he eats salt, or something salt-flavoured immediately on rising from bed, which means that he has won the "contest".[1]

* The labial semi-vowel "*w*" in "*k'w*", "*t'w*", as also in "*kw*", "*tw*", etc., met with in this article, labializes the preceding consonant sound, the combination "*k'w*", "*tw*", etc., representing labialized varieties of "*k'*", "*t*", etc. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Georgians also have such a superstition.

/10 cont./

867 immediately upon their return home revert to the practice ac-
579 quired in childhood -- stealing. This is of course not the fault of the school or of secondary education, but of the traditional views on this "trade," contact with which kills every other way of looking at it, as the lone wheat-stalk is smothered among the weeds that surround it.

579 In his stealing, the Abkhaz is treacherous. The best of friends, to all appearances, do not hesitate to steal from each other, and in Abkhazia it is no rare thing for brother to steal from brother, father from son, or son from father. It is almost proverbial that when an Abkhaz has no one to steal from, he robs himself. There have been instances of an Abkhaz stealing a horse from a neighbor on a dark night, taking it miles and miles away and exchanging it for another, riding back home on this fresh horse the same night, and the next morning, the minute his neighbor raised the alarm, rushing over and being the first to offer his sympathy and joining the chorus of people calling down curses on the thief and dashing off with the others in frenzied pursuit.

685 The Abkhaz thief will not admit his crime, even /11/ when
579 he could be convicted on the evidence of witnesses. When a
692 robbery case is tried at village meetings, a decision of the judge in favor of the accused is not infrequently influenced by the audacity of the latter's pretexts, by his shameless subterfuges, and by his so-called "talking circles around them." In general at such
•[537] meetings, any exhibition of sly rhetoric, however shameless, on the part of a notorious thief finds not only attentive listeners but even admirers. "He saved himself by the bravery of his speech," they say in such cases.

And though such "eloquence" on the part of the thief often saves the guilty one from punishment, the victim, understandably, does not believe in his innocence and tries to get back at him at the proper moment for his losses, according to the formula of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

682 At present vengeance for spilled blood is on the wane, but at one time it was one of the most important features of Abkhaz life. The custom of blood-revenge puts the relatives of a person

/9 cont./

867 the blue skies... and so it is, day after day. These very same examples of unpunished robbery and violence, repeated daily, must leave deep traces in the conscience of the observant young shepherd. Upon his return home, phenomena he has observed in nature are consolidated and, as it were, sanctified in his eyes by the authority of the older members of the family: every day there are discussions and squabbles about the loss or stealing of cattle; on the one hand, he hears words of praise and approval applied to stealing, and, on the other hand, curses addressed to the thief; finally he sees how the housewife, the lawfulness of whose behavior he has never once thought of doubting, very cautiously digs up the buried meat of an animal stolen from the neighbors and cooks it... And when the child, grown wise by
867 observing his mileu and by the successful experiences of his
579 relatives, /10/ matures into a grown youth, his parents and the leading members of the family in general provide him with arms, having given him their blessing beforehand with the words: "Now make your own living, make your fortune by thievery and robbery, the same as all the people your age." Hence, thievery here has not only the status of an example worthy to be followed when the proper occasion presents itself; it is presented as an obligatory modus vivendi, as a dogma, sanctioned by the authority of the parents and of the older members of the family in general.

867 Let us turn our attention to still another circumstance. As
579 is well known, children love fairy tales and all kinds of stories
538 and legends. In the long winter nights, the old men and women tell stories to the Abkhaz children. But the majority of such tales are likewise harmful from the point of view of moral influence, for the contents of these legends, fairy tales, and stories go no further than eulogies of stealing, robbery, and raiding; in them are sung the praises of the daring, determination, and bravery of some "abrag" (abrek = bandit), of his resourcefulness as a thief, his keen-wittedness when in difficulties, his audacity in robbing and seizing another man's property. This may provide a partial explanation of the regrettable phenomenon in the life of the Abkhaz, that even persons who have had a modicum of secondary education

/13 cont./

576 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge mtsuge seizgat," i. e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

[608] [755]

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

181 [565] [411] [293]

Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

526 [541] 538

/18 cont./

III.

Education -- The Educated -- The Educators

565 While the upper class in Abkhazia enjoyed privilege and
566 power, the situation of the lower classes was one of great oppression; /19/ the batoni (master, feudal lord) looked upon his subject, his slave, as a commodity; he could sell or pawn him
[567] according to circumstances. However, even after the abolition
[579] of slavery, the position of the peasantry did not improve, due to the fact that the nobility did not cease from robbery and pillage and plunder until the most recent times.

565 Under such a state of affairs, all the peasantry could do
608 was to resign itself to feudal conditions and try, wherever possible, to get protection. The best method lay in the custom of adoption, or the rearing of the sons of the aristocrats by the peasants. Thanks to this custom, the aristocrats themselves were strengthened, for in this way they gained in the peasants their most faithful supporters, while at the same time freeing their wives from the onerous duty of bringing up and feeding their own children. This is the reason that in all Abkhazia there is not a single peasant who has not reared one or several princes and nobles; as a consequence of this custom, hardly one per cent of the nobles have been nursed at their own mother's breast.

Before the beginning of childbirth in a family of the aristocracy (didebuli), on the one hand relatives and acquaintances and, on the other hand, the future foster-mothers of the expected child, accompanied by their husbands and female relatives in order to be able to bear the newborn foster-child back to their village with due ceremony, begin to gather around the pregnant
344 woman. During the childbirth, girls from the village also come to
565 visit the expectant mother in order to distract her and to relieve
[533] her sufferings during labor with gay songs and the telling of fables
[538] and fairy tales. The husband is absent during this time. According to the customs of the country, he is not allowed to be present when his wife gives birth and therefore leaves the home. Above

[772 cont.]

C 533 Art and play. The old traditions of the past and of the deeds of the Cherkess were preserved by the wandering minstrels (gegwako); they used to sing of them at feasts and festivals, whereas nowadays they present hardly anything but songs of congratulation and praise and comic songs. As far as is known, the A 538 folk literature of the Abkhaz is rich in religious and festive songs and prayer formulas, and probably also in heroic and other

A [534]

Fig. 452. Guitar with two strings, Abkhaz (1/7 natural size) (Museum für Völkerkunde, Hamburg).

A 534 songs. As accompaniment to the singing, a two or three-stringed guitar is used (Abkhaz, ap'khirtsa, see Fig. 452) or the Mingrel lute (atšangur), the handle of which is sometimes carved or shaped in the form of a head. In addition, the C 534 Cherkess still use long flutes (tšebizga) of reed or metal, with three finger-holes, and triangular harps (pšine-duk-okyo), which also occur among the Swan; they are 20 to 70 centimeters wide and have 40-centimeter-long hair strings attached to the resonator and to pegs above.

A 535 The favorite dance among the Abkhaz is the "shoulder-dance," in which the young people hold each other by the hand, [773] turn around as they sing, and from time to time leap in C 535 the air. Among the Cherkess there were girls' dances (denyola), in which they hopped in one place, round dances of men and girls (uk) combined with singing, and wild war-dances (kofa) performed by a single fully-armed man.

A 526 The principal amusements of the men are contests of strength, stone-casting, ball-throwing, and the like. The Abkhaz used to fight duels with the sword, usually while sitting

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF THE ABKHASIANS

(From the materials on Abkhasian ethnography)

By N. S. JANASHIA

[A translation of the article published in *Khristianskii Vostok*, The Christian East, Petrograd, 1915, vol. iv, No. 1, pp. 72–112.]

FOLLOWING the suggestion of N. Y. Marr that I should revise and translate into the Russian language my notes on "Materials on the ethnography of the Abkhasians", published 16–17 years ago in Georgian periodicals, chiefly in the journal *Moambe*, I made a careful review of all the collected "Materials", whether printed or still in manuscript form. In order to make the revision more complete I invited the aid of a special Commission from the Abkhasians of the village Adzvibzha, where the materials in question were actually collected. 114

The Commission consisted of the following persons: Mrs. Gidcha Janashia, my mother, with whose help the materials were checked originally; Kharikhan Tchengelia; Kelamat Delba, an eighty-year-old man, possessing a perfect knowledge of Abkhasian; Abdakhw Lolua, an orator; Alexis Dopua, who has a wide knowledge of tales and legends; Mushagw Tchengelia; and Alexis Janashia. The Commission worked with me for two days, the 2nd and 3rd July, 1914. 115

Furthermore, being still doubtful about certain aspects of my task, I checked the materials again at the meeting of the Adzvibzhuaans, during the month of August, and I found that all agreed in the main, differing only in matters of detail. One of my chief difficulties was that members of the Commission refused point blank to tell me tales I wanted to have in connection with my object, because "it is forbidden to tell tales in the daylight!" I therefore found it very hard to verify tales I had formerly taken down. So strong is the power of superstition nurtured for centuries! I am convinced that much that is incomprehensible in my "materials" would have been susceptible of explanation in the light of these tales. 124 [538] [128]

All the ceremonies and rites herein presented are described by a man who has taken an active part in their observance; at first, during his childhood, when he was imbued with profound religious feeling, and later in life when, although no longer professing "faith", he approached them with the greatest interest with a view to their study. I have endeavoured to record all the details, discovering in them curious survivals preserved through the popular beliefs and customs of the Abkhasians. In my opinion these details represent invaluable material for the scientific study of religious observance. 123

I was at one time very much tempted to use the material I had 121

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/28 cont./

766 It is necessary to point out one more characteristic feature. When the head of a family dies and the sad procession has just started out for the burial-ground with his remains, a rope is thrown over his house; the ends are held by two people who pull it first one way and then the other. The meaning of this curious custom, which is also widespread in Mingrelia, is the following: with the death of the head of a family and the removal of his body to the burial-ground, the house begins to shake and threatens to collapse, and in order to avert this they have recourse to the rope. After the body has been carried out and the house remains undamaged, a rifle is fired as a sign of joy.

764 Graves for men are dug waist-deep, for women still deeper,
[562] because in the opinion of certain Abkhaz, women in general are sly and cunning (paivan), and the Abkhaz proverb says, "Don't
[539] tell your wife what is on your mind or she will crawl out even from her grave and divulge your secret." Therefore a deceased woman is buried deeper and covered with more earth.

When the deceased has been placed in the grave, it is rimmed with wooden boards and earth is poured in from above.

The Abkhaz do not have special burial-grounds. Each family has its own burial-ground. More often, high and mountainous places near a common road serve as burial-grounds. The tourist or traveler will easily observe that in Abkhazia the best and most poetic spots are occupied by graveyards.

765 The attention paid to the deceased continues long after his burial. The mother and the wife of the departed, his foster mother or her daughters, dressed in mourning and barefoot, visit the fresh grave every day, morning and evening, and bitterly bewail the deceased /29/ and beg him to assist them in various daily troubles, to intercede for them with other deceased persons, to give them their regards, etc. This continues up to 40 days or until the "Saturday mourning banquet." Until this time, the belongings of the deceased are displayed in the house and mourners as they arrive first weep over these belongings and then also over the grave. Likewise until this time, and often for the duration of a full year, a portion for the deceased is placed on

/35 cont./

776 affected man in his infant stage; no wonder the Abkhaz personi-
[194] fies and deifies all these, together with trees, woods, fields, etc.; he deifies some things because they bring him help, others because they do him harm. Accordingly, Abkhaz mythology created special protective deities for every activity /37/ of man, whether agriculture, industry, art, or herding. Some of these are, for instance: Aithar, the protector of cattle; Dzhadzha, god of sowing; Shasha, god of the smithy, and others. Many of these deities are female; for instance, the protector of the element of water, "mother of the water," is a woman; the earth itself is personified as a woman; there is also a "lady-wind"; the ancestor of cattle is female, as is the ancestor of nanny-goats; the god of sowing, Dzhadzha, and others are also female.

777 Besides these deities, there are the Ashatsa-chaphatsa, the
776 "creator" and "forger" gods. There are either two of them, or many. Under the influence of Christianity, they are presented
[194] in the form of angels. "Every soul" is born through Ashatsa-chaphatsa. They determine the future of the newborn child, his happiness and unhappiness, the length of his life and the hour of his death, and they make an inscription on his forehead (lakhints'ara /see foreign text/) concerning all this. The Abkhaz is certain that these inscriptions on the forehead exist and believes that anyone can confirm it with his own eyes. Incidentally,
777 let us tell an Abkhaz tale that illustrates the inevitability of
776 predestination or fate.

539 In the night two men set out to steal. On the way they were caught in a heavy rainstorm. They took refuge under the porch of a peasant's hut. Peeping in, they saw a group of women gathered, among them a woman in labor, who shortly afterwards gave birth to a girl. The "creators" and "forgers" did not hesitate to appear. One of them said, "The newborn girl shall become the wife of one of the thieves outside that are looking in. This shall be his fate." The second of the "creators" and "forgers" confirmed the words of the first. The thief, already middle-aged, said on hearing this, "I am not young even now, and she has just

/37 cont./

777 776 539 been born; God save me from such a marriage." And so he planned to kill the newborn baby; when everyone in the house had fallen asleep, he slipped quietly in, carried the child out, ripped open her belly, and threw it upon the flat roof of the hut. Then the two thieves went on their way. The child's wailing awakened the women, who found her, sewed up the wound with silk thread, and thus saved her from death. And no matter how hard the thief about whom the above-mentioned prophecy was made tried to find a wife, he was /38/ unsuccessful. Meanwhile the girl who he thought was dead reached marriageable age and one day somehow met the thief. He immediately fell in love with her and married her. Then it was shown how inevitably every predestination and decision made by the "creator-forgers" is fulfilled.

VII.

Prayers in Honor of the Deities

782 Prayer is the name given to those religious ceremonies and rites accompanied by sacrifices in honor of the gods which are performed according to a definite pattern set and sanctified from olden times.

[776] Each deity may independently show, within his sphere of activity, grace or wrath toward man; for instance, he may send sickness or misfortune on him or his cattle, etc. [787] The Abkhaz easily determine by special signs whether the deities' anger is the result of deviations from the fixed pattern [688] of the religious rites. To avert the wrath of the gods caused by omissions in prayers and sacrifices, they must repeat the offerings and complete whatever was omitted the first time; uncorrected omissions and mistakes in ritual weigh heavily as guilt felt toward the angry gods, even upon generations [755] far removed from the sinners. If anyone falls ill in conse- [753] quence of neglect in ritual toward one or another god, he must offer him a sacrifice in order to recover. If he is

/40 cont./

782 prescribes a prayer to the water, which is thought to be the
755 cause of the illness. Since the protectress of the waters,
[791] the "Mother of Water," is a woman, a sinless old woman is invited to the ceremony.

776 A large, clear, inaccessible fresh-water lake is thought
[778] to be the residence of the "Mother of Water"; she may also dwell in a pure spring, untouched by anything unclean, such as a pig, etc. The "Mother of Water" sometimes comes out of her dwelling to the shore, and at that time anyone may see her. This is how the Abkhaz describe this "Mother of Water." She is a most beautiful, bewitching woman; her locks are incomparable and chestnut in color; her eyes are laughing. The Abkhaz who has been bewitched by her talks
753 to his comrades thus: "Eh, brothers, I have been vanquished
776 by the 'Mother of the Water,' and from now on I no longer
539 belong to your society. Recently I rode into a dense forest and saw a table spread there under a big oak; a mirror and a lighted candle stood nearby; the 'Mother of the Water' was sitting in front of the mirror, smiling at her own beauty and combing her long hair, which reached the ground. My arms fell to my sides from exhaustion; I could not take my eyes from that wonderful vision. When she saw me, she quickly arranged her hair and came towards me. I felt giddy... Without a word she raised all ten fingers, asking me, 'Are you willing to be my husband for ten years or not?' I shook my head, but she would not stop, and with the proper number of fingers raised, she offered me in turn nine, eight, seven years, and so on /41/ of marriage. As I kept on refusing, she finally raised her last little finger and fixed her gaze upon me. I immediately gave my consent..." (1).

1. "Etnograf. pis'ma iz Abkhazii /Ethnographical letters from Abkhazia/," Konst. Machavariani, Droeba, 1884-1885.

755
782 The "pure" old woman who was invited to the ceremony,

/58 cont./

731 789 donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

[539] [825]

25.

Saints

776 778 [184] Independent of the general worship of all the deities discussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny, Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.

782 [796]

[231] On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

/58 cont./

782 heifer is selected from the herd, and in the evening it is brought
231 into the house where the family that is invoking the church's grace has its permanent residence. A supper is prepared, consisting of cooked or roast mutton, and the whole family washes and puts on clean linen. The head of the family takes a wax candle in one hand and in the other the rope tied around the calf's neck; he addresses the /59/ cathedral with a prayer for his protection and that of his family; he states that the calf will be dedicated to the church and that all its male offspring will be sacrificed to it, and that, instead of heifers, rams will be sacrificed. After this prayer an incision is made in the calf's ear; from this time on it is considered inviolable and cannot be used for food. On the day of its dedication to the cathedral the calf must spend the night in the house with the family.

782 If an inhabitant of one of the three above-mentioned
798 villages moves away, he is obliged to bring an offering each year to the cathedral in the village of his birth. Girls from these villages who marry inhabitants of other villages are not exempt from this rule. They as well as their children are still regarded as under the protection of the cathedrals of Lykhny, Pitsunda, or Ilori and are therefore obliged to offer sacrifices to them.

M. Dzhanashvili

●539 /A supplement on pp. 60-64, containing Abkhaz sayings and proverbs, is omitted in the translation; see foreigh text./

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhaz RI3
Adzvibzha

When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwadù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *dämen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megrelianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread is baked in rhododendron (*à-k'wazhwe*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

* The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*k'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*ky*", "*wy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotises the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*k'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*k'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

[1] In Abkhasian *àtshyashwe*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *aut'ari*) *tsh'obro*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsh'ya*), good (*à-bza*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *boslobe* (an abstract form of *boseli*, cowhouse) or *ilorobe*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ilori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhini-Aut'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaḫwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; *dsdsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ḫwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àämen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nɔ̀khak zənàp-yanà, bzhyə—tswəmzàk zxəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[1] *Alaḫwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *hwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *govi* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *Au, Awa—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are included in both pleiades.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVihZha

796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alòshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[262] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[754] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[776] In the opinion of the commission, *Alòshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[231] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight."[1]

The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If
[821] someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri*, *vàri*, *khəzò*, *jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*wàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khəzò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

776 (*d*) *Àmza-nəhwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

* See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the
[104] production of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ʒ" (the ancient Arabic *'ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of
[171] Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Aralòs* (cf. *Alòshintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Araia*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Àmza, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, guard over our men! Grant them beauty and strength!" Simultaneously the men-folk crowd around him, for the moon is the god of men; the women-folk stand at a distance. "Increase our cattle and all our weal! Burn out the eyes of the spell-binders, and the tongues of the evil-speakers! *Wootsw*, *Wootsw*!" the supplicant continues his incantation and, calling to the cattle, spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà* or *a-k'wərpà*) now in the direction of the sea, now towards the mountains.

"The moon is a man, and the sun is a woman," say the Abkhasians.

I will now quote from my notes the following brief account of a very characteristic Abkhasian tale:

(1) "Seven very rich Abkhasian brothers had no sisters; whereat they were very aggrieved. Eventually, however, a sister was born, but from that moment the wealth of the brothers began to diminish; every night some invisible power drove away their cattle in herds. The youngest brother who was endowed with the gift of prescience (*ashàna*) said to the others: 'A demon has entered our house in the guise of our sister; if we do not kill him, our days and those of all in the whole district are numbered!' The brothers, however, would not listen to him. Thereupon he left his home, and travelled abroad, where he married a beautiful maiden-sun (*Àmra*). After several years, feeling home-sick, he set out to visit his brothers. Alas! what did he find? There was nobody left alive in the whole district except a mouse and his own sister-demon (the witch). She at once devoured his horse, and stepped aside to sharpen her teeth. On the advice of the mouse, the moon-brother, to save his life, took to his heels; he managed to inform his wife-sun of his misfortune, who hastened to deliver him. But the sister overtook her brother and began to devour him. By this time his wife Àmra had arrived. She pulled her husband, *Àmza*, towards her, but the demon pulled also; and so a deadlock ensued. *Antswà* decided the matter thus: he allowed the wife-sun to have her husband, the moon, for fifteen days, and the demon to have him for the remaining fifteen days of the month. And from that time began the phases of the moon. As soon as the moon becomes full it means that the demon has begun to devour Àmza, on which account the moon diminishes gradually; towards the end of Àmza's life his wife, full of love, comes to the rescue of her unfortunate husband, and as her caresses and care restore him to life the moon waxes again. When it is full the demon reappears and the story repeats itself!"

(2) "The Eclipse of the Moon. During the eclipse a monster, Atv (*Àtwyə*), falls upon the moon to devour it. In order to save their

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha.

539 [789] benefactor, the moon, the Abkhasians fire at the monster and thereby drive him away." [1]

(3) The Moon and the Sun. A beautiful Abkhasian widow woman had a son and a daughter, who often absented themselves from home for the whole day; they would go off early in the morning and return only late in the evening. No amount of coaxing or tenderness on the part of the mother sufficed to keep the children at home or stop them from indulging in their daily adventure, so she decided to shadow them. She found they were seated under the shadow of an ancient oak, in a thick forest, enjoying themselves in an agreeable pastime with the moon and the sun. Before them were all sorts of eatables. The mother, flying into a passion, flung fresh dung at the moon and the sun. The sun-sister, being a more fastidious creature, washed herself, but the less particular moon-brother did not do so, and hence arose the dark patches on the moon; the brother, the moon, and the sister, the sun,[2] then soared up to the sky for ever, while the widow and her children returned home."

821 Here I will also note that the Abkhasians always welcome the new moon by looking at its reflection through a mirror, or over a silver piece.

[753] A certain mainly infantile disease, similar to convulsions, is called by the Abkhasians *dmzakra*, i.e. " to be caught by the moon ".

(e) *Àmra-nə̀hwa*, Prayer to the Sun.

794 [796] When he has finished the invocation addressed to Àmra (the moon), the supplicant takes the sun-shaped cake, and, with the women surrounding him, he says: " Thou, Àmra, *Àyt'ar intswakhwadə̀*, the great part of the great *Àyt'ar*, grant warmth, and caress the women of our family! Increase our cattle," etc., and then spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà*) in the usual manner, uttering *wootsw*.

According to D. I. Gulia, in the village of Dchilou they use the form *Amera* instead of *Àmra*.

(f) *Anàp'a-nàga*.

[796] After that the supplicant takes *alakwàra* (a large mortar) and, addressing himself to the god *Anàp'a-nàga*, says: " Thou, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, send us the warmth of thine eyes and of

[1] Exactly what *Atèwyə* denotes is difficult to explain. In connection with the above quoted tale, the etymology of this word may, however, perhaps elucidate its significance. *Atè* denotes the barn- or screech-owl; *wy* may be the root from the word *a-owyè* (man); consequently *atèwyə* may denote " man-owl ". And by *atèwyə* is, perhaps, understood the sister devouring the brother-moon. [795]

[2] Their gender is often confused: sometimes the moon and the sun are sisters or brothers, sometimes the moon is brother and the sun sister.

[3] I think the Georgian word *misezi*, cause, is derived from the Abkhasian *amese*, cause (from *àmsa*, moon). (It is doubtful! Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

himself, by placing before the "icon" also the amount he was to pay to the opponent.

Muhammadans also take the propitiatory oath at Ilori, together with the Christians.[1]

There are many stories current about the power of the Ilori "icon" to work miracles. I learned one of them from the lips of Biram Tkhazou and Seyt Zhania.

"In ancient times the Ilori 'icon' determined all the disputes of human mortals in the following manner. High up in the centre of the church, hung the golden scales of Justice. Under these scales stood the suitors, praying zealously to the Ilori 'icon', who inclined the scale over the head of the righteous. Knowing this, Abkhasians would not venture to break the law or wrong one another; peace and happiness reigned upon the earth. But men are cunning; an impious Abkhaz decided to deceive the great Ilori 'icon'. He owed a neighbour of his a hundred *manat'i* (= rubles) which he would not pay. The creditor complained. They both went to Ilori. When they appeared before the 'icon', the debtor handed to his creditor his staff which contained the hundred *manat'i*. The scale inclined towards the creditor, thus acquitting him of the charge. He took back his staff and left the church. The Ilori 'icon' was 'offended' and because of this fraudulence on the part of one Abkhaz it punished the entire people: the 'icon' took the scales of Justice to heaven for ever."

In ancient times the Ilori "icon" provided oxen for itself on the eve of the wake festival. The Commission assured me that eye-witnesses of this miracle were still living in Abkhasia, but none knew their names. As this providing of the oxen is described by A. Lamberti in the manner in which the Abkhasians relate it to-day, I will quote the description from his work.[2]

"On November 20th[3] they celebrate St. George's Day. A superstition prevails among the people that this celebrated martyr, on this day, procures for himself an ox from the neighbourhood and brings it by night into the Ilori Church dedicated to him. This church is held in great esteem, not only by all the Megrels, but by the neighbouring peoples also. Therefore it is very rich in gold and silver[4]—the icons are all made of these metals and are adorned, too, with precious stones; and even the doors are mounted in thick sheets of silver. So revered is this church by all the people, that, although situated

[1] In Northern Abkhasia *Dadwrep'sh* is endowed with a similar power.

[2] A. Lamberti lived as a missionary for eighteen years in Megrelia (1635–1653), and, according to him (and also to other sources), the present-day southern Abkhasia (Abshua) constituted then part of Megrelia, the northern boundary being the River Kodor.

[3] The 10th of our (old) style.—N.J.

[4] At the present time, too, it is the wealthiest and the most influential of all the churches of Abkhasia.—N.J.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

in a distant country place and near the sea-coast, thieves have never entered there, nor has any enemy ship raided it or despoiled it of its wealth. Indeed, so highly is this saint (the Ilori 'icon') honoured, that not only would the valuable contents of the church not be stolen, but, even if precious stones were scattered *outside* the church, in its vicinity, no one would touch them. (It is the same even to-day, N.J.) In addition to the local population, this saint is also feared by the Abkhazes,[1] and even by the Turks, deprived though they are of the light of Christian religion. They all worship, and fear, this sacred object (the 'icon', N.J.) . . .

"On November 20th, the Prince (of Megrelia, N.J.) goes to the Ilori Church accompanied by his court officials, nobles, and the people of Odishi (i.e. Megrelia), to participate in the feast of the 'ox'. Not only do the Odishians go there on that day, but also the Abkhazes and Svans, in great numbers. The church is enclosed in stone walls about the height of fifteen spans. At its entrance are large gates surmounted by a beautiful campanile containing many bells. On the eve of the feast, in the dusk of the evening, the Prince, accompanied by a large retinue of bishops, princes, and nobles, rides up to these gates, orders them to be locked, then seals the keyhole with his own seal and returns home. The following morning, before dawn, the Prince, accompanied by the same retinue, again rides up to the gates. When they have assured themselves that the seal has not been tampered with, the Prince removes the seal and opens the gates. Within the Church walls, the ox is found. At the sight of this miracle, the people, with great fervour, offer up their thanks to St. George, and the church bells ring out the glad tidings of the miracle all over the country-side. Everyone is firmly convinced that St. George himself provided the ox and led it with his own hands into the enclosure. Also, it is said, the saint leads the ox thrice from the mountains to the sea and back, and offers the ox, thus sanctified, to the people as a gift . . .

"A long time ago, so it is said, an unbeliever (the Abkhazes say that he was a Muslim from Trebizond, N.J.) came here from a country many hundreds of miles away from Odishi. After witnessing the miracle and how the people celebrated the occasion, this obstinate man not only disbelieved, but began to mock the Christians, telling them that they were light-minded and foolish enough to believe anything. In spite of his attitude, the people tried to persuade him to embrace the true Faith of Christ, and unanimously affirmed that all the miracles of St. George were really true. 'Very well, then,' said he, 'I will do this. At my home, two hundred miles away, I have an

[1] In Ilori the Megrelian language prevails to this day; many, however, know Abkhasian also.—N.J.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

ox of a certain colour. If the miracles you talk so much about are true, it should be an easy matter for St. George to bring my ox into this church to-night; then, certainly, I will gladly embrace your Faith.' The condition was accepted. On the following morning, early, on opening the gates, there was found within the enclosure an ox which the unbeliever recognized as his own. Thus he was convinced of his error, and embraced the Christian Faith."[1]

(c) *Indl-qwùba.*

The *T'avadi*-s Marshania, and all those Abkhasians who descended from the mountains (Dsabalaa, Dalaa, Pskhvu, etc.), offer sacrifices (a ram, without fail) in exactly the same manner to a sanctity, *Indl-qwùba*, instead of to the Ilori " icon ". I could obtain no information of any kind about this " icon ". Everybody I questioned gave the same answer: *Indl-qwùba* is equal in power to *Dodòrop'sh* and the Ilori " icon ".

These offerings are performed early in the morning, and serve as breakfasts. Every Abkhaz slaughters some animal for the meal (the favourite one is a castrated goat), it is often prepared on the Saturday. They also pay the customary Paschal visits. After the midday sacrificial meal they all go to the public square, where they indulge in games, chiefly football. During Easter week they also organize horse racing, the most popular sport of the Abkhasians.

7. *The Second Day of Easter*

This is a commemoration day. A variety of dishes are prepared, all of which are placed on a table by an open window. The eldest of the family, holding a candle and a glass of wine in his hands, prays to the souls of deceased relatives that they grant his family peace and happiness. Then follows the pouring of wine on the meat and wheat dishes. The whole family stand behind the supplicant. After the prayer each member approaches, places a piece of frankincense on burning embers, and pours wine on the food. Here stands too a smoking pipe. All remain seated in silence, in order that the souls of the deceased ancestors may eat in peace.[2]

The Abkhasian, as has already been stated, have no Paschal greeting such as " Christ is risen ". They welcome each other with a kiss, saying: " May God grant us that we meet again next year," to which the other replies: " And for a hundred years."

[1] Quoted from the Russian and Georgian translation of A. Lamberti's *Relations della Colchide laggi detto Mengrelia nella quale si tratta dell'Origine, costumi e Cosi naturali di quei Paesi.* Published in Naples, 1654.

[2] This rite will be described in detail in my work *The Cult of the Ancestors.*

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvi62h9

they, therefore, take precautionary measures to avoid becoming victims of the malignant will of the evil spirits. Nothing is left outside the house, or in the courtyard; nobody sleeps out of doors. To safeguard themselves from evil spirits, the superstitious attach pieces of wax to their hair. Crosses are made from *a-lakwòmha* (Geo. *lakumkha*),[1] to which are appended acanthus leaves, and these are placed at the courtyard gates, house doors, the gates of the kitchen gardens and cornfields, the poultry and cow-houses, etc. Acanthus leaves are hung around the necks of the domestic animals. The Abkhaz is convinced that *dwyst'aă* dare not approach these crosses, which are also a protection against evil eyes.

During this night the evil spirits go out to look for booty, under the leadership of their mother, *Arapàp* (Meg. *rokapi*). On this expedition they are joined by human beings in whom evil spirits have taken their abode. Some of these evil spirits ride wolves or cats, and devour all the animals left outside by their owners who had no time, or had forgotten to drive them into shelter.[2] All evil spirits without exception stir abroad during this night; they wander growling from village to village and through the forests. For this reason it is easy to find out and catch them, and with this object youths go into the woods, where they make a large fire, using the wood of *a-lakwòmha*. The youngsters hide behind the bushes and watch out to see if they can recognize those of their neighbours into whom an evil spirit has entered. It is believed that the demons never pass a bonfire without stopping and warming themselves a little by it. Often quarrels arise on this ground, with unpleasant consequences. This custom of seeking after the evil spirits, "demons," is called *Awyst'aă lòkhora*, which denotes "the catching of the demon"; it is also known under the Megrelian name of *dchindchat'oba*. To this day an Abkhaz believes that an evil spirit can enter into, and remain in, a human body, particularly in that of an old woman.

The chief *dwyst'aă* is the eldest son of the sister of God, and that is why He, being a blood relation, cannot destroy him, although he may frighten him off with thunder. Here it will be appropriate to quote the following popular story:—

"At the time of the partition of the work between God and the devil, the former, exercising the right of seniority,[3] suggested to the devil that they should divide the world between them. The latter

[1] The Russian *krushina*, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, that is, *alaternus* (R. Eristov mentions the plant *lakukha*, but he does not explain it. Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*).

[2] To safeguard an animal from wild beasts when he strays in the forest, they "bind the mouth" of the wild animals as follows: a pair of scissors is tied and a suitable prayer is uttered. "A sure remedy."

[3] The younger divides, and the elder chooses.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

agreed. During the night God caused the earth to be covered with luxuriant vegetation. Captivated by the beauty of vegetation the devil suggested to God that the best way to divide the world between them would be for one to have the earth and the other the vegetation. God took as his share the earth, and the devil received the vegetation. God then ordered him to remove his vegetation immediately. Only now did the devil realize his mistake, which, however, he rectified thus: he restored the vegetation to God, and in return for it he begged and obtained from Him the right to the souls of those who fall from the trees, having climbed them without first praying to God for their safety. . . ."

(*b*) *Barbanjia* (*dchiakohona*)

Before sunset on the 14th August the Abkhasian youths light, in their respective courtyards, a fire of flax straw (at present, owing to the lack of this straw, they use dry fern, etc.). Each person leaps thrice through the flame of this fire, shouting " I have burnt the evil spirit; I have burnt the evil spirit ". By so leaping through the flame an Abkhaz " purifies " himself of the evil spirit. After they have leapt three times through the flame each throws a piece of salt into the burning fire, and then, altogether, they begin to beat the fire with sticks to extinguish it, at the same time shouting the above quoted words. At the conclusion of the whole operation, the neighbours inform each other of their victory over the evil spirit by firing a gun. This manner of destroying the evil spirits is called " the burning of the demon " or *Barbanjia*. The denotation of the word is incomprehensible to me.[1]

(*c*) *Nân-ĥwa*

On the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, the " pure " (eldest) woman in the family prepares *a-tcha* (" a round bread stuffed with cheese "), boils a cock, and leads the whole family into the kitchen garden. Here they all kneel in front of the blossoming cucumber vine, and the eldest woman makes offering to Nan, saying: " the great Nan (*Nân-du*)! We who offer thee this sacrifice, established by our ancestors, humbly entreat thee to have mercy upon our house: increase it like the stars in the sky! " etc. The kneeling family repeat with her, *Âmen*. But no one knows who *Nan* (*Anan*) is; they only know that she is a goddess of procreation of the human race. Of the Mother of God there is no knowledge whatever.

[1] The Georgian equivalent is *Dchiakohona*, which is observed on Ash-Wednesday. *Dchiakohona*, according to Tchubinov, denotes " the leaping through the fire on Wednesday of Passion-week ".

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family, being angry with her masters, took a portion of the dough for *akwakwàr* destined for the "god" *Got'anùa*, and placing it in a scoop of bitter-gourd (*akwapey*, Geo. *kopa*), hid it in the loft. As usual the family went to bed after the ceremony. But unfortunately for them the offended *Got'anùa* soundly thrashed all of them, using for the purpose the very same scoop in which had been hidden the dough destined for himself. This *gvari* makes propitiatory offerings at the will of sorcerers to *Got'anùa* twice a year, during the night before Christmas and before the Assumption.

Got'anùa, under the name of *Okhvàmuri*, evidently spread throughout Megrelia during the missionaryship of Lamberti.[1]

V. Deities whose Cults have no Fixed Dates

1. *Et-nòkha—Àga-nòkha*

The sea, like other manifestations of nature, has its own "part of deity", called *Àga-inkhwò* or *àga-intswakhwò*. An Abkhaz makes an offering to this deity when he goes to the sea coast for any considerable time. The sea deity is not to be trifled with; if it is slighted it becomes turbulent, it surges, and punishes the unrespectful. Therefore even the children are forbidden to throw pebbles, or to spit into the sea. The worship of this deity has been preserved in its purest form among the Bzib Abkhasians, namely among the peasantry of the Gudout (Gudaut) district, of the *gvari* of Amp'aràa. It has been described by A. Tch(ukbar), in *Sotrudnik Zakavkazskoy Missii* ("The Collabarator of the Transcaucasian Mission"), 1912, p. 373 sqq., where the deity *Et-nòkh-Àga-nòkha* is called *Et-nykh Ag-Nykh*. *Àga* denotes sea, *(a)nòkh*—"icon." But what does the word *Et* denote?[2]

2. *Àshkha-intswakhwò* (god of mountains)

Mountains also have "their part of God" known under the name of *Àshkha-intswakhwò*. *Àshkha* denotes mountain; *intswakhwò*, "his (of the male rational being) part of God." I have pointed out above that the Abkhaz often uses the word *nòkha* in the sense of god, which in the Christian faith is understood, or more correctly, translated, as icon. The god of mountains "governs" all the mountains and the beasts inhabiting them. Abkhaz shepherds make offerings to this god twice a year, in the spring when they drive the cattle to the mountains, and in the autumn when they drive them back. To him are subject also mountain game. In order to preserve the game from

[1] A. Lamberti, op. cit., pp. 148-9.

[2] This word manifests a consonance with the Assyro-Babylonian name of the god of the sea, *Ea*. Is this a mere coincidence?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

their enemies, the god ordered the bird *aqaqəb* to watch over them; the Megrelians who have the same belief, call this bird *kakabi*.[1] As soon as this bird sights at a distance a hunter or some other enemy, it soars high up into the sky, and by screeching warns the game of the approach of danger. That is why this bird is always found near the beasts.

The god of the mountains demands respect. He punishes severely those bold enough to bathe in clear, transparent mountain streams. The Abkhaz shepherds do not, therefore, bathe in these streams, being afraid of drawing upon themselves the displeasure of the god of the mountains: the nude body is said to defile the waters of the mountain spirit.

3. *Azhwèyp'shaă* (gods of beasts and hunting)[2]

Azhwèyp'shaă are gods of beasts and of hunting. They dwell in impassable forests, and lead an ordinary family life. To them are subjected all game, and without their will no one can shoot bird or beast. These gods kill for themselves some wild animal, boil and eat its meat; they wrap the bones in its skin and then revive the animal by striking it with a wand. Only after an animal has been resurrected in this way is a hunter granted the right to shoot it, and then only the particular hunter for whom the gods have destined it: no one else, try as much as he will, can kill it. Of this the Abkhasians are aware, and they employ the following characteristic greeting when they encounter a fellow hunter: *zp'zə-aakhəw yûzp'shùr*, "Which is destined to die, that (animal) is waiting for thee!" the answer being, "For both of us is waiting!"

A few words may be said about the way in which Abkhasians divine the success or failure of their hunting on the day of the Assumption. Before starting out the hunter takes a sharp knife and repeatedly strikes the table, cutting nicks in it. Passing his palm over the table, he says: "Whether thou sayest fifteen, whether I say fifteen, whoever says fifteen (it will be) thirty, fifteen." If the nicks thus cut number exactly fifteen it is a good omen; the gods will reward him with game.

The Abkhasians learnt this method in the following manner. A hunter once followed a wild goat, but he could not shoot it. It led him into the thick of a wood, where he saw a huge cauldron, around which sat gods. They invited him to join them. Nearby stood a goat. They killed the latter and invited the hunter to partake of the meal. When the gods began to throw bones into the hide, the hunter concealed one of them, putting in its place a small stick (or a small knife,

[1] The word is consonant with the Georgian *Kakabi*, partridge.
[2] The term is construed as plural.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

according to another version). The gods revived the goat and destined it to fall a prey to our hunter. On the following morning, on his way back, he sighted a wild goat, killed it, and to his horror and amazement in its body he found his stick (knife).[1]

These *azhwèyp'shad* have eternally youthful daughters, who often have love affairs with the hunters whom they reward with plenty of game. They select bachelor hunters as their object of love. One of them, however, once fell madly in love with a married Abkhaz; their friendship lasted for many years; often she herself visited him. One day, at dawn, the hunter's wife found the daughter of the gods, whose beauty was more than earthly, in the arms of her husband. The two were asleep on the balcony of the corncrib. A light breeze had disturbed the golden curls of the lovely goddess, and a few tresses lay in the dust. The wife acted in a manner born of pure love and sympathy. Quietly approaching the sleeping couple she lifted up the golden curls of the beautiful goddess and placed them so that they would not fall into the dust. When the goddess awakened she was so struck with the magnanimity of the beautiful wife of her beloved that she restored her husband to her, and forever forbade her sister-goddesses to have love affairs with married men.

Hunting is a sacred sport to the Abkhasians, and it is the custom never to talk of the hunter when he is hunting, but to say, if necessary, "he has gone somewhere." The hunters divide their prey into equal proportions; the head of the animal or bird, however, is given in addition to the one who killed it. Anybody whom the hunters encounter by chance also gets an equal share. Nor are the neighbours forgotten. Each goes up to the prey, and sprinkling it and also the successful hunter with some grain, says: "May gods grant thee a better one on another occasion!"

Any kind of falsehood or evasion of the rules of hunting consecrated by custom is severely punished by order from above. The following story may be quoted as an illustration of this:—

A well-known hunter once killed a wild goat, and another hunter, having heard a shot, ran up to him. The successful hunter said: "Behind that corner there is hiding another goat which you can easily follow up; it will be better to take home a kill each than to divide one between." The second hunter ran in the direction indicated but found no goat there. For this lie the gods punished not only the hunter himself but also his whole *gvari*; they have never since shot a single head of game.

[1] This story is written down from the words of A. Kardava, a Megrelian shepherd. In his version the wild boar figures instead of the goat, and *tqashi-mep'e*, king of the woods, instead of *Azhwèyp'shad*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *Abna-intswakhwə* (god of the woods)

The woods also have their "part of deity", *Abna-intswakhwə*. *Abna* denotes wood, forest; *intswakhwə* we already know. When an Abkhaz enters a forest, or if he has to pass a night there, he prays to this deity for protection. I have, however, failed to collect more information about this god of the woods.

Abna-wowyə

In ancient times the forests of Abkhasia were inhabited by *Abna-wowyə*, "forest-people." *Abna* denotes forest, and *a-wowyə*, man. They were strong and courageous, but very ugly in appearance. Their bodies were covered with bristle-like hair. From their breasts projected a strange object, shaped like an axe and strong as steel, which served as a weapon; and by pressing an enemy to their breasts they could cut him into two. They preyed incessantly upon the people, who, however, in the long run, and with God's help, destroyed them. The last of them dwelt in an impassable forest, called Urak', near the village of Adzvibzha. In the same forest there lived also the courageous Khukhw Dchit'anàă, with his herd. Between Khukhw and this "forest-man" there was intense animosity. The ugly "forest-man" would come to Khukhw's hut every midnight, and inquire: "Dchit'anàă Khukhw,[1] art thou at home?" "Yes, I am. If thou art not an old woman come and fight me," responded the fearless Abkhaz. The "forest-man", however, would never agree to a single combat. Khukhw, tired at last of these childish pranks, resorted to a ruse. Placing a log in his bed, he went outside and hid behind a bush not far from the hut. At midnight the "forest-man" came as usual, and receiving no reply, he concluded that Khukhw was soundly asleep. Entering the hut and seeing, as he thought, the sleeping form of his enemy, he was about to aim a blow at the log, when the Abkhaz, who had crept in unawares, fired a shot at him. The "forest-man", although mortally wounded, managed to crawl away, and on the following morning Khukhw followed up the blood-stained footprints, and finding the dead body of his enemy, buried him with due honours. Khukhw appropriated the wealth of the last "forest-man", and also married his beautiful wife. . . .

5. *Atswaqwə*, the rainbow

The god of the rainbow is very vindictive; he soars high in the clouds and punishes, either by death or the infliction of disease, all

[1] A peculiarity of the Abkhasian: the surname precedes the Christian name.

/13 cont./

576 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a [608] [155] long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge mtsuge seizgat," i. e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging 181 the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children [565] of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, [411] [293] dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

526 Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games [541] are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 538 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [795] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes marula (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pistol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both [302] sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [260] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few

/30 cont./

765 526 After the meal, the dzhiriti takes place, reminiscent of the tournaments of the Middle Ages. Now the fair sex occupies the passageway near the house. Young men on horseback assemble in front of the beauties and vie with each other in attempts to display their wit, inventiveness, and knowledge in speeches, and their bravery in the dzhigitovka /trick-riding/ which will follow.

The main dzhigitovka, tarchei /see foreign text/, consists of the following. One of the competing riders accepts from the host of the feast /31/ or from one of the beauties some strips of chintz, a small sewn boot, a rosary of chestnuts, or something else, and, holding this tarchei in his hand, he gallops ahead with it while the other lads pursue him and try to catch him and take away the tarchei. If someone is successful in this, the tarchei passes into the hands of the one who has taken it away from the first rider; then that one races off, and the others again chase after him. The one who escapes capture and manages to bring the tarchei back to the place where the competition started is the winner. The horsemen's competition does not end with this, however; they continue to prance around on horseback, pick up money from the ground at full gallop, etc.

765 541 Sometimes there are also horse-races at the mourning banquet. Children of eight to nine years of age are horsemen. A goal is pointed out to the competitors, and the first one to reach it wins something. In this case, the hosts present the winners with the horse of the deceased, with some animal, or with a khak (arshin or span) of chintz.

VI.

Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz

971 "Up to the year 1867," wrote Mr. A. in his excellent article on the Abkhaz, "the religious situation among the Abkhaz was absurd in the extreme. One found there the rites of all religious doctrines, from fetishism to Christianity. These people had no precise conception of any religion, but adopted from all of them

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

ox of a certain colour. If the miracles you talk so much about are true, it should be an easy matter for St. George to bring my ox into this church to-night; then, certainly, I will gladly embrace your Faith.' The condition was accepted. On the following morning, early, on opening the gates, there was found within the enclosure an ox which the unbeliever recognized as his own. Thus he was convinced of his error, and embraced the Christian Faith."[1]

(c) *Indl-qwùba.*

The *T'avadi*-s Marshania, and all those Abkhasians who descended from the mountains (Dsabalaa, Dalaa, Pskhvu, etc.), offer sacrifices (a ram, without fail) in exactly the same manner to a sanctity, *Indl-qwùba*, instead of to the Ilori " icon ". I could obtain no information of any kind about this " icon ". Everybody I questioned gave the same answer: *Indl-qwùba* is equal in power to *Dodòrop'sh* and the Ilori " icon ".

These offerings are performed early in the morning, and serve as breakfasts. Every Abkhaz slaughters some animal for the meal (the favourite one is a castrated goat), it is often prepared on the Saturday. They also pay the customary Paschal visits. After the midday sacrificial meal they all go to the public square, where they indulge in games, chiefly football. During Easter week they also organize horse racing, the most popular sport of the Abkhasians.

7. *The Second Day of Easter*

This is a commemoration day. A variety of dishes are prepared, all of which are placed on a table by an open window. The eldest of the family, holding a candle and a glass of wine in his hands, prays to the souls of deceased relatives that they grant his family peace and happiness. Then follows the pouring of wine on the meat and wheat dishes. The whole family stand behind the supplicant. After the prayer each member approaches, places a piece of frankincense on burning embers, and pours wine on the food. Here stands too a smoking pipe. All remain seated in silence, in order that the souls of the deceased ancestors may eat in peace.[2]

The Abkhasian, as has already been stated, have no Paschal greeting such as " Christ is risen ". They welcome each other with a kiss, saying: " May God grant us that we meet again next year," to which the other replies: " And for a hundred years."

[1] Quoted from the Russian and Georgian translation of A. Lamberti's *Relatione della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia nella quale si tratta dell'Origine, costumi e Costi naturali di quei Paesi.* Published in Naples, 1654.

[2] This rite will be described in detail in my work *The Cult of the Ancestors.*

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwsa-rə̀mshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwsa-rə̀mshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nə̀hwa* (*anə̀hwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə̀*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering: walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateyna, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

/25 cont./

585 as a sort of prediction that she, too, will give birth to a boy. A little later the bride is brought to the separate small house (amhara), and then the real wedding-feast begins.

On the second and third days the relatives come, meet the bride, and bring her presents, each according to his means. When they want to get acquainted with the bride, a friend of hers, her delegate (dade), lifts from her face the veil with which she is covered; the visitors greet the bride, and she, without saying a word, stands erect and quietly, with her eyes lowered. The responses are not made by her, but by her friend. When sufficient time has elapsed after the wedding, /26/ she answers questions addressed to her, but, instead of saying "yes" or "no," she only shakes her head.

The young bride remains in the amhara for some months; [592] then she is invited into the main house, and from this time on the whole care of the household is put on her shoulders. She always tries to satisfy her parents-in-law and to act according to their wishes. For several months she does not speak to anyone; afterwards she begins to speak, first to the younger people in the house and in the village, and later on also to the older ones, and last of all to her parents-in-law. The young bride is referred to by all the villagers as "our daughter-in-law"; they bring her various kinds of sewing-work, which she does without reward.

602 For many years the young couple avoids being seen together by the husband's parents, and they cannot eat together [606] in their presence as long as they live. In conversation with older [264] people, whether relatives or strangers, the wife cannot refer to her husband as "my husband," nor the husband to his wife as "my wife." The daughter-in-law may not sit down on the bench on [606] which her father-in-law or mother-in-law have been seated. [551] The wife can never call her husband by name and in cases of necessity manages instead with the pronouns "you" and "he." In the same way, she does not call by name her brother-in-law, her husband's foster parents, members of the family, the village elders, etc. The husband, on the other hand, only

avoids

/47 cont./

782 and light, well-being and success in everything; grant
821 beauty, charm, and elegance to our maidens so that, like you, they may shine, glitter, and warm people." In the prayer to the moon, they express the wish that the children should become like it in brilliance.

/48/ 15.

Prayer to Khphath and Khvnash

782 This prayer is offered on the Saturday of the week of
[796] Thomas, with cheese, bread, wine, candles, etc. brought as offerings. The aim is to solicit health and prosperity for the family. On one of the following Saturdays a similar prayer is addressed to Khvnash. Khphath and Mdzhath are
• [551] men's names in Abkhazia.

16.

"Ananaha"

782 Anan means "mother." The oldest woman of the
796 household places some money on a loaf of bread (Anan l phara = money of Anan) and goes into the kitchen-garden where she places three cucumber-leaves on the loaf of bread and the same number on her own head. She then fastens a lighted candle to a cucumber stalk and, holding incense in her hands, prays, "Mothers and creators, do not let me have grief from my sons: do not cast me into sorrow because of them, but let me see them prosper." A similar prayer is said to Ashatsanha, the god-creator or god-father. A cow and money are offered in sacrifice to him. During Lent, the village maidens also used to pray to the "Mother of the Waters" that she might grant them long and thick hair.

17.

Prayer for the Ear

753 The Abkhaz says, "ahsa r lmha i klou," which means

A 585 [761 cont.] eat with her people or show his face, which he conceals with the hood of his coat. The bride now stays for a time in a special hut (amhara), after which a feast is arranged and she is blessed by the father of the house; the same is done for the groom when he returns to his father's house (apʻkhaǯarkhe = removal of shame). The customs at the wedding, which takes place after the trousseau is completed, are almost the same as among the Osset (see p. 76). The young bride continues to live in the aforementioned small hut and may not speak with anyone. The young married couple may not visit the parents of the groom at the same time for several years afterward, and the two of them may never eat with them at the same time. The man may never utter his wife's name, nor she that of her husband or those of his relatives, in front of others.

A [606] [593] [601] [551]

C 583 582 [762] Among the Cherkess, too, girls are seldom stolen now; the bride is acquired for money and animals. The men marry from fifteen to twenty-five, the girls from twelve to sixteen years of age. During courtship (nakekh) the priest (mollah) completes the marriage contract after closure of the sale, as among the Mohammedan Abkhaz, whereby he joins the hands of the representatives of the bride's people. About two months later the purchase price is turned over, and soon thereafter the two- to three-week wedding festivities take place, with which are associated several peculiar customs preserved best in Kabarda.

A 584

C 585 The custom is so closely connected to the former abduction and defense by the kin group that, after the appearance of the bride, her mounted escorts defend themselves with their knouts against the youths, who stand in front of the house and attempt to unhorse them with poles until they succeed in jumping over the fence and gaining entrance to the house.

The groom is taken in for the wedding days as a "foster-son" (kan) by another kin group, from which he is assigned an escort (ǯatso-kot) of his own age, who attends him, hides him, since he is not allowed to meet older men until the "reconciliation" (see below), watches near him during the night, and rides about with him in the daytime in the hill pastures; here he gives him animals (ǯaga = for roasting), which he gives his people and

C [764 cont.]
608 cow, and other things. After two to three years they take their
[431] ward (akhup'a), together with gifts of animals and food, to the parents, who honor them and give them rich gifts. After the child comes of age, the foster-father gives him back to his parents, who give him animals, weapons, and money and honor him as a close relative. If the foster child dies before this, he buries him in accordance with custom, holds the memorial service, makes an offering, etc.; if his ward is orphaned, he also buys him a bride or induces him to abduct one.

C Rearing is aimed at teaching the boy good manners,
[867] perserverance, courage, bravery, skill in horsemanship, fencing,
[868] shooting, and, formerly, manipulation of the bow and skill in raiding. For his part, the ward must stand by his foster parents, search for lost property, and protect them from robbery and insult, if need be with the help of his own parents. If the foster father, foster mother, or one of their children dies, he procures the coffin, leads the interment and memorial ceremonies, and observes the rules of mourning. The foster-father's sons are his devoted friends; if one of them marries, he gives the bride rich gifts, or when one of them has abducted a girl, he takes her into his protection, and, as a prince's son, no one would seize him for it.

C Noble girls are likewise given to foster parents, who
[867] instruct them in the manual skills of women and teach them
[868] modesty, obedience, and the like. In the seventh or tenth year,
[29] the laced leather bodice is put on them (see above, p. 18).

A The children of Christians are occasionally baptized
C and given a Christian name, but the name by which they are
551 usually called is, as among the Osset, the native one chosen at birth--among the Moslems, many Tatar or Arabic ones are used. Such are, for example, Goinuqua (= fur-son), Keltšuqua (= wish-son), Keltsuqua (= wish-son), Koituqua [765] (= upside-down son), Meiremaqua (= Friday-son), T'a'šine (= lamb of God), T'agelak (fear of God), 'Adzug (= young dog), Togdžuqua (= fat-man's son); Temir (= iron), Petak (= twig), Košbaš (= double head), and the like. Feminine: Džennet (= bliss),

[765 cont.]

A 55 Devlet-khan, Tatema, Kistaman, Tepsike, Gosop'o khuraya (= round prince's-daughter), etc.

A 766 Death. In Abkhazia, when someone has been struck by lightning, he is laid in a coffin, and this is hung on a tree (as in old Lazistan, see above, p. 671 [untranslated], in Siberia, and other places), until the body has completely decayed; then the bones are buried.

C 766 In the sixteenth century the Cherkess used to seat the body of a nobleman, after having removed the entrails, on a tall, wooden bedstead in the field for a week. The two nearest relatives stood nearby, and on the bed was a girl who brushed away the flies with a silk cloth stuck on an arrow, while the first of his wives sat at his head without weeping. Afterwards the body, with clothing and weapons, was laid in a split and hollowed tree trunk, along with part of the gifts, silver vessels, bows, arrows, and the like, which relatives, friends, and serfs had brought, and set on the ground at the burial-place; over it was raised a mound whose height showed how much esteem the deceased had enjoyed. As a sacrifice for the dead, the innocence of a twelve to fourteen-year-old girl was offered, which the youths attempted to take by force as she lay on an ox-skin. After the burial a servant led the dead man's bridled horse to the grave on several days and called him to eat three times.

A 764 Now deceased persons are laid to rest with the assistance of a Christian or Mohammedan clergyman (mullah). The lamentation for the dead at the coffin and amidst the clothing and weapons of the deceased, the feast for the dead, etc. resemble the customs of the Khevsur (see p. 737 and following [untranslated]); here, however, male mourners, too, kneel at the coffin. While the body is being carried to the grave, a rope is thrown over the roof and pulled back and forth in order to determine whether the house, which has been severely shaken by the departure of the deceased, still stands firm (as in Mingrelia). In earlier times, the Cherkess also threw the right ear of his horse into the grave, after they had first put the reins into the dead man's hands and led the horse around the grave three times (cf. p. 80). The mother, the wife, and the foster

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *Àbna-intswakhwə̀* (god of the woods)

The woods also have their "part of deity", *Àbna-intswakhwə̀*. 776 824
Àbna denotes wood, forest; *intswakhwə̀* we already know. When an Abkhaz enters a forest, or if he has to pass a night there, he prays to this deity for protection. I have, however, failed to collect more information about this god of the woods.

Àbna-wowyə̀

In ancient times the forests of Abkhasia were inhabited by *Àbna-wowyə̀*, "forest-people." *Àbna* denotes forest, and *a-wowyə̀*, man. 539 They were strong and courageous, but very ugly in appearance. Their bodies were covered with bristle-like hair. From their breasts projected a strange object, shaped like an axe and strong as steel, which served as a weapon; and by pressing an enemy to their breasts they could cut him into two. They preyed incessantly upon the people, who, however, in the long run, and with God's help, destroyed them. The last of them dwelt in an impassable forest, called Urak', near the village of Adzvibzha. In the same forest there lived also the courageous Khukhw Dchit'anàà, with his herd. Between Khukhw and this "forest-man" there was intense animosity. The ugly "forest-man" would come to Khukhw's hut every midnight, and inquire: "Dchit'anàà Khukhw,[1] art thou at home?" "Yes, I am. If thou art not an old woman come and fight me," responded the fearless Abkhaz. The "forest-man", however, would never agree to a single combat. Khukhw, tired at last of these childish pranks, resorted to a ruse. Placing a log in his bed, he went outside and hid behind a bush not far from the hut. At midnight the "forest-man" came as usual, and receiving no reply, he concluded that Khukhw was soundly asleep. Entering the hut and seeing, as he thought, the sleeping form of his enemy, he was about to aim a blow at the log, when the Abkhaz, who had crept in unawares, fired a shot at him. The "forest-man", although mortally wounded, managed to crawl away, and on the following morning Khukhw followed up the blood-stained footprints, and finding the dead body of his enemy, buried him with due honours. Khukhw appropriated the wealth of the last "forest-man", and also married his beautiful wife. . . .

5. *Atswaqwa*, the rainbow

The god of the rainbow is very vindictive; he soars high in the 776 clouds and punishes, either by death or the infliction of disease, all 824

[1] A peculiarity of the Abkhasian: the surname precedes the Christian name.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

776 of an analogical formation in a *sh*-root- (= creating, to create, whence the verbal noun *asharà*) word *ashatswà*, which represents an epithet [171] of a deity, and is equivalent to Georgian *gamtcheni*, creator.[1] I have not heard this word used apart from its association with the word God. This root is usually used in its past-participle form. A popular Abkhasian expression is *antswà-hazshàz*, Creator God, but the following phrases are also in common use:—*ashatswà ìrshaz*, by the Creator [192] (lit. creators') created (said of something very pleasing), and *ashatswà ìrmshaz*, by the Creator (lit., creators') not created (said of something unpleasing). In these examples *ashatswà* is understood to be in the [193] plural, which is unmistakably borne out by the pronominal particle **r** (*i-r-shaz*, *i-r-mshaz*) which indicates the plurality of the subject (the determinative word in our examples).

It may, however, be argued that the phrases just quoted are composite, and that the particle indicated, a fossilized morphe which has lost its meaning. We will therefore quote another phrase, *nas ashatswà irshàma art'*, "Is it possible that the Creator (lit. creators) created these?" (it was said of the animals), in which *ashatswà* is directly represented as the subject in the plural. This word, and the notion conveyed by it, must have simultaneously undergone the same metamorphosis as the basic name itself, i.e., they must have lost first the intrinsic and then the formal meaning; it became a simple plurale tantum, for instance, in the widely used name for a kind of sacrificial animal, *ashatswà-dzatwə*, the Creator's (lit. creators') sacrificial animal, in which we should have had, in accordance with the rules of the Abkhasian compound word-formation, the form *ashatswà-rdzatwə*. . . .

It is clear that in this case the result of the acute conflict between old and new ideas, and in connection with it, between dead and living forms, is far less definite than in the case of *antswà* itself. The changes to which the latter has been subjected have been more rapid; but nevertheless, owing to language inertia, we find facts which reveal the original meaning of the process of word-formation. One such fact, quoted by Uslar, is given above. Of no less interest, in my opinion, is an example I found: the heroine of a story which I noted down, bears the following name, *antswà rt'əp'hà khànkwla*, that is "God (|| gods)-their-daughter-Khakula" in other words, the god's daughter [551] Khàkûla (Khàkûla being a girl's name). The same pronominal particle **r** (*r-t'əp'hà*) explicitly indicates here that for the remote ancestors of the speaker, God represented the union of numerous forces.[2]

[1] In Megrelian, *odabade*. See Janashia, *The Abkhasian Cult and Mode of Life* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, St. Pb., 1916, vol. v, issue 3, p. 168. Also Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 132.

[2] See also Dcharaia, op. cit., p. 32.

/14 cont./

folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager. Their only musical instrument is the achangur, a balalaika, and even this has been borrowed (to judge from the name) from the Grusians (Grusian: chonguri). Abkhaz versification for the most part is governed by alliteration. Examples:

Varvultu --- barfuntu

Chilar marda qulardam

Arba arba sinarba

Masta mastarou

Masta stakhou

Siamul utsa

Siamul siakhou

Siandzhar utsa.

/15/

II.

Home-life of the Abkhaz -- Family -- Position of Women.

The whole domestic life of the Abkhaz is arranged so unpretentiously that all the necessary household articles, with the exception of iron things, are produced by the Abkhaz himself from materials which are at hand. The smith's trade, which requires a certain special technical knowledge, is left in the hands of special craftsmen. In every village there are two or three blacksmiths who will produce anything the Abkhaz needs from a piece of iron which he gives them. The smiths are highly regarded by the community and their craft itself has sacred significance in the eyes of the Abkhaz.

Trading is considered a shameful occupation, and the Abkhaz therefore do not engage in it, but if it were developed, the Abkhaz could sell many things at a profit. For instance, the Abkhaz women, who, by the way, are great masters of all kinds of home crafts, produce from sheep and goat skins the

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
433 cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[031] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
[541] beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[269] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/23 cont./

608 565 peasants also rear the children of clergymen, of merchants, and even of other peasants. There are also cases of even nobles taking in and rearing the sons of strong and influential princes on the same basis.

IV.

Marriage

583 Some fifteen years ago the groom usually abducted a girl for a wife; that is to say, without the consent of the girl's parents or her own consent, he carried out an attack upon her with the help of his comrades and led her away by force. Such cases are rare nowadays. On the contrary, abductions are now for the greater part carried out with the consent of the bride herself, though not infrequently against the will of her parents. In the latter case, the one chosen as a bride comes at night to a previously arranged place a few versts from the parental home. The groom comes to the same place with his comrades, on horses. She mounts a horse brought especially for her, and the whole cavalcade gallops back to the home of the groom or to that of some influential person. No pursuers are able to take the bride away from the abductors, for they are prepared, if necessary, to fight to the last drop of blood for her. Soon after the abduction the girl herself announces publicly that the abduction took place according to her personal wishes and that she can be happy only with her abductor. Mutual negotiations are now [584] initiated and everything ends in peace; the son-in-law brings presents to the mother and the father of the bride, and the case is closed.

584 583 It must be noted that the Abkhaz never abducts a girl lower in standing than himself. This would be considered a loss of [558] honor for the abductor. On the contrary, everybody tries to abduct a girl of higher or at least equal birth. To propose to a [154] girl and to receive a refusal either from her or from her parents

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz
562 woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than
462 the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes
[565] toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and
[535] old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men
[579] and dance with them. There have been instances of women being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

562 If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the
586 Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and
[692] defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

/28 cont./

766 It is necessary to point out one more characteristic feature. When the head of a family dies and the sad procession has just started out for the burial-ground with his remains, a rope is thrown over his house; the ends are held by two people who pull it first one way and then the other. The meaning of this curious custom, which is also widespread in Mingrelia, is the following: with the death of the head of a family and the removal of his body to the burial-ground, the house begins to shake and threatens to collapse, and in order to avert this they have recourse to the rope. After the body has been carried out and the house remains undamaged, a rifle is fired as a sign of joy.

764 Graves for men are dug waist-deep, for women still deeper, [562] because in the opinion of certain Abkhaz, women in general are sly and cunning (paivan), and the Abkhaz proverb says, "Don't [539] tell your wife what is on your mind or she will crawl out even from her grave and divulge your secret." Therefore a deceased woman is buried deeper and covered with more earth.

When the deceased has been placed in the grave, it is rimmed with wooden boards and earth is poured in from above.

The Abkhaz do not have special burial-grounds. Each family has its own burial-ground. More often, high and mountainous places near a common road serve as burial-grounds. The tourist or traveler will easily observe that in Abkhazia the best and most poetic spots are occupied by graveyards.

765 The attention paid to the deceased continues long after his burial. The mother and the wife of the departed, his foster mother or her daughters, dressed in mourning and barefoot, visit the fresh grave every day, morning and evening, and bitterly bewail the deceased /29/ and beg him to assist them in various daily troubles, to intercede for them with other deceased persons, to give them their regards, etc. This continues up to 40 days or until the "Saturday mourning banquet." Until this time, the belongings of the deceased are displayed in the house and mourners as they arrive first weep over these belongings and then also over the grave. Likewise until this time, and often for the duration of a full year, a portion for the deceased is placed on

/49 cont./

755 782 ram or a lamb, together with loaves of bread, etc. All this is taken to the place selected, and the patient himself is led there. No women are present, for they are not [562] allowed to approach this sacred place. A venerable man, holding a candle, declares, "Great god, as is proper and as the fortune-teller has prescribed, the worshiper today stands before you; he has brought sacrificial animals and loaves of bread ... . Have mercy upon him, be merciful to him, if he has sinned before you, forgive him. I beg you to let him go from this day forward, to leave him and free him like a loosened knot." While saying these words, the venerable man moves the candle around the patient, lights it, and places it nearby. He then /50/ takes another candle [776] and prays to Michael-Gabriel. Upon the completion of this ceremony, the sick person returns home alone, while the others sit down to a meal.

One such ceremony, however, is not considered sufficient for the send-off of so eminent a guest as a god. The [796] Abkhaz is therefore obliged to repeat the ceremony annually. One day a week is set aside as a holiday in honor of that same supreme being; this day is considered such a sacred one that the house even remains unswept, etc.

19.

Aphi

776 821 Aphi (2) is the god and master of the thunder, lightning,

[113]

2. See Sborn. sveden. o kavk. gortsakh, No. V, Tiflis, 1871, pp. 15-16, article "Religioznyye verovaniye abkhaztsev /Religious beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A. -- where, by the way, this deity is called Afy.

[782] and all atmospheric phenomena in general. The most solemn prayers in Abkhazia are offered in honor of this god.

/50 cont./

782 233 [796] On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder- [562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

782 731 789 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre- [533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva rysshva and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also [821] during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second, to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one 782 731 574 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, reminding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvlbzha

The Megrelians also know this septenary, *shk'vit'-ul-i*, in honour of which the majority of families let loose a cow with a pierced ear. Her milk is not used for food. The bullock is offered in sacrifice, while the heifer is reared. The well-known Pshav *Kviria* is, perhaps, related to Megrelian Àyt'ar. I have pointed out above that among the Megrelians the god of cattle-breeding is called *Zhini Ant'ar*. *Ant'ar* is the Abkhasian *Àyt'ar*, while *zhini*, in Megrelian, "high," "heavenly," is equivalent to Abkhasian *khikh*. The Abkhasians, however, appear to have split up *Zhini Ant'ar* into two gods, *Àyt'ar* and *Khikh*. They appeal for help to the latter in the spring, when the cattle are taken to the mountain pastures. They pray to him under the shadows of trees. On four pillarets are placed poles, which are covered with leaves of trees, particularly of the wild hazel tree, the oak, or yoke-elm. A cheese curd wrapped in chestnut tree bark is placed on this table (*ashwamkyàt'*)* which is covered with greenery; on it is also placed *dtchamak'wa*, a kind of millet porridge, cooked with cheese. In front of it is also placed milk gruel. Women are not allowed to be present. The head of the family, standing with uncovered head in front of this green table, called *ashwamkyàt'*, prays that *Khikh*, the great part of the great deity Àyt'ar, may increase his cattle and send all good things. While praying he spills a little of the gruel towards the sea and towards the mountains, uttering *wootsw*. The prayer over, he takes the cheese curd and passes over it cross-wise a hazel "knife", which is really a stick cut into a tapering, knife-like shape, after which he actually cuts the cheese curd with a real knife.[1] This ceremony of prayer is followed by a dinner, the remains of which are not cleared away. Three of the supports or legs of *ashwamkyàt'* are cut off (each with one stroke), the fourth remains there untouched. It seems to me probable that the table itself received its name from this act of cutting. Megrelians also know this *ashwamkyàt'*, which they call *sumket* (*sumi keti*), "three sticks," derived, perhaps, from *sumkvat'*, in which case it would denote "three cuttings" (*kvat'* < *kvat'ua* = to cut, to fell), i.e. "cut with three strokes."[2]

The Georgian Mountaineers also have their *Anator-i*.

(*c*) *Alàshkintr* (*alàskintr*).

These cakes are also put aside. The prayer now takes three new

* The combination *shw* represents a labialized variety of "*sh*"; cf. "*shw*", p. 120, note *. In *ashwamkyat'* the "*sh*" is not only labialized, but also lingualized or lotized, which lingualization is not, however, represented in the transcription. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] By using the wooden knife, the Abkhasian probably pays tribute to that very ancient time when his ancestors used that kind of knife.

[2] If the first part *shwam* represents the Megrelian word "three", one should keep in mind not the "K'art'lianized" form *sumi*, but the original, Tubal-Kainian *shumi*; see Marr, *From the Journies to Seanie* (in Russian), in *Khrist. Vostok*, ii, pp. 17–18. (Editor, *Khrist. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

guardians, whose power extends to his descendants, but not to those of his brothers or sisters. In the village of Adzvibzha almost everyone is obliged to carry out this " praying to God ", Christians as well as Muhammadans.

Every Abkhaz keeps in his cellar, in honour of " God ", a special pitcher filled with must of the very best grade. However great his need, an Abkhaz will not, for any consideration in the world, open this " sacrificial " pitcher until the celebration of the cult of " praying to God ".[1] Early in the morning, on returning from the church, the head of the family surrounded by the male members of his household, sacrifices a young he-goat over the " sacrificial " pitcher, and entreats " the great God to receive graciously the humble offering made by him in accordance with the instructions of his forefathers . . ." He humbly entreats the Great God " punish us not for our faults and trespasses ", etc. After this the meat of the immolated goat is boiled, and sacrificial wheat-cakes are baked. All this is taken down into the cellar, and placed in front of the sacrificial pitcher. The members of the family kneel down, while the head of the family reverently cleans and opens the pitcher, and, holding in his left hand a hazel stick upon which the heart and liver of the goat are transfixed, he prays *Antwza-du* (to great God) that He grant him and his family a long and happy life. In his prayer he never fails to mention that they are performing the rite " in the manner they were taught by their fathers and grandfathers ". Afterwards he fills a glass with wine from the pitcher and pours it on the heart and liver and the sacrificial cakes; he then passes the latter, with the wine, three times over the heads of the supplicants who are kneeling down, and says: " Grant us the warmth of Thine eyes and of Thine heart! Protect us from all infirmities and sickness." Then follows again the libation of wine Now they all rise, turn round from right to left, and each places a piece of frankincense on burning coals. For a few minutes they all stand still humbly, while the great God " receives " their offerings, and then, with strict observation of order of seniority, a glass of wine and a small piece of the heart and liver is given to each of the participants. It should be noted that only the household members are allowed to partake of these sacrificial offerings. Even the married daughters of the family are treated as strangers, and they are not allowed to share in the offerings with their husbands and children. It is sinful even to think of the sale of the wine. In most of the families the female sex is generally forbidden to partake of this offering.

Thus do the Abkhasians perform annually the domestic offering to God of " His share ". But every three to five years each Abkhaz

[1] The same applies to other " sacrificial pitchers " referred to below.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

is obliged to present "His share" (offering) to God, in a forest, for which purpose a clearing is chosen under the shadow of a tree, oak or yoke-elm. Here is offered usually a castrated goat the age of which is equal to the number of years since the Abkhaz last prayed in the forest. Women are not allowed to take part in this rite, although they help to prepare the sacrificial cakes. The prayer is said by the elder of the *grari*, who receives the hide of the immolated animal. The offering takes place in front of *ashwamkydi'* (described above). The prayer ceremonial is the same as in the case of the domestic offering, although the pitcher of wine kept in the cellar is not used; for the purpose of the oblation a little wine is brought in a smaller pitcher. All the men in the neighbourhood participate in the ceremony, and when it is over they seat themselves on the grass; herbage is placed in front of them, and on this is served the dinner. A small piece of the heart and liver of the immolated animal is given to each of the participants. All the sacrificial food must be consumed on the spot; nothing may be taken home. The horns of the victim are hung high above the *ashwamkydi'* and left there. Three legs of *ashwamkydi'* are then cut, and the assembly disperses.

Some families dedicate to *Antswahwə* cows which are let loose with perforated ears (see above, p. 125); these cows are called *adzatwə*, which is difficult to translate; it apparently denotes "pledge", "security". Bullocks born of these cows are offered in sacrifice in place of castrated goats.

(*b*) *Aylər-nəkha.*

On the same day, simultaneously with *Antswakhwə*, a sacrifice is offered to *Aylər-nəkha* (*Ilər-nəkha*). The ceremony of offering the sacrifice is exactly similar to that described above. There is the same "wine pitcher", goat, cakes, and the same manner of praying. Also, at certain intervals, the sacrifice is made in the woods, in the manner described above. Many keep *adzatw* cows in honour of the Ilori icon. The only difference being that women have a freer access to these offerings than to *Antswakhwə*. Here I will note that if the pitcher for the "sacrificial wine" becomes in any way damaged (even if only slightly chipped), a new one, larger and dearer, must be substituted without fail. This is a general rule for all pitchers of this kind.

Aylər-nəkha (*Ilər-nəkha*) denotes the "icon of Ilori". This appears to be the same icon of St. George, which is kept in the small, walled-in church of the village of Ilori. This village is situated on the seashore, three miles from Otchemtchire. What is this Ilori icon? Which saint does it represent? For what is this saint remarkable? The contemporary Abkhaz has no notion whatever. The masses do not know to this day that it is the image of St. George. All they know

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZh9

who transgress against him. In order to avoid incurring the anger of this god, an Abkhaz will not draw water or wash himself when the rainbow is in the sky, and is generally careful about the use of water. Like any other god, *Àtswaqwa* may bestow the " warmth of his eyes and his heart ", in return for offerings and prayers. Whoever is affected by his wrath, grows icteritious, emaciated, to save his life he must, at the direction of the sorceresses, make the following offering to the rainbow god :—

On one of the Thursdays [1] the old (" pure ") women take the sick person to the river, pass (Geo. *shemoavleben*) around his head 4–5 yards of variegated chintz, and pray : " The great god ! Acknowledging his transgressions this sick person (the name is mentioned) has appeared before thee, and humbly entreats thee to accept this chintz as a pledge that he will perform the established offering at the proper time, at the direction of the sorceresses ! "

On the following Thursday he is taken again to the same river and place. Usually three women say the prayer, but there may be seven. Men, with the exception of the patient, are not allowed to be present at this ceremony. The sick person is dressed entirely in white. The eldest woman [2] kills a capon and a hen ; women carry out all the duties, preparing *ashwamkyàt'*, " *ghomi* " (millet pudding), *akwakwàr*, and *atcha-gvazàl* (Geo. *ghvezeli*, an oblong bread), of each of which there must be seven of the usual, and seven of the very small size. All these are placed on *ashwamkyàt'*, on which also burn seven wax candles. The prayer is said by the eldest woman. The patient kneels in front of the offering ; he is taken home immediately the ceremony is over, and he must not look back. The seven small *akwakwàr*, *atcha-gvazàl*, and seven small portions of *ghomi* (*abòst'a*—millet porridge), are thrown into the water ; they represent the share of the female slaves (*aht'ap'hwòs*) of the rainbow god. Everything else is consumed by the women themselves ; the remains being thrown into the river, for nothing must be taken home.

Muhammadans must also burn candles at this offering. The candles are fixed on a kind of hoop made of grape vine. At the end of the ceremony the hoop with the burning candles is thrown into the river.

It should be noted that in some parts of the country this god is called *Àtswaqwa-òlia* (the Rainbow-Eliah). So at least he was called, according to the testimony of D. I. Gulia, by Javaz, the famous woman supplicant.

[1] Thursday in Megrelian is *tsaxàlia*, the day of the sky. It is noteworthy that the Abkhasians perform usually on the day of the sky, the majority of rites that are seemingly connected with the sky, as in the case given.

[2] The Abkhasian women kill animals only on occasions of certain offerings.

/11 cont./

682 killed under the obligation of killing either the murderer or one of the latter's relatives. A blood-feud passes from generation to generation and is a person's sacred duty; unavenged blood is considered a shame and a disgrace for the living relatives of the person killed. The Abkhaz believe that if for some reason or other blood remains unavenged, it will avenge itself.

In case the killer himself managed to escape, a relative
[628] of his was held responsible; he was killed, captured, or robbed and finally ruined. Even the killing of the meanest slave often led to clashes involving whole villages; if a mutual understanding and peace were not restored among them, the result of such a feud would be that one of the villages had to face ruin or move away to another place.

682 In blood-feuds the descent of the persons involved played
565 an important role. If, for instance, a prince killed a peasant, the relatives of the latter had no right to avenge the blood of the killed upon the killer, for "the blood of a peasant is not equal to that of a prince." Therefore, instead of the prince himself,
[608] it was his foster father who had to pay for the blood shed by the prince.

There were different settlements for the blood of a peasant, a nobleman, or a prince.

Although the personal qualities of a man commanded /12/ special attention in Abkhazia the blood of a peasant was nevertheless valued lower than the blood of a nobleman, and that of the latter lower than the blood of a prince. For instance, if the blood of a peasant was valued at five human souls, then the blood of a nobleman was worth three times more, and that of a prince five times more than the blood of a peasant. The price
[435] of a life was determined in terms of spans /pyad'/. A soul (person) four spans tall was valued at 30 cows or 30 rubles in silver; one of five spans, 50 cows or 50 silver rubles; and one of six spans, 70 cows or 70 rubles in silver. Arms and clothing were added as supplementary payment. Blood was paid off with cows, goats, sheep, and beehives. The number of the latter was determined on the basis of the value of a cow.

/13 cont./

5?6 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a [608] [755] long time, walks three times around him with the words, "Itsge mtsuge seizgat," i. e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging 181 the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children ● [565] of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, [411] [293] dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

526 Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games [541] are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 538 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than
562 the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself,
462 and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes
[565] toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and
[535] old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men
[579] and dance with them. There have been instances of women being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

562 If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the
586 Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and
[692] defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband; and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

/18 cont./

III.

Education -- The Educated -- The Educators

565 While the upper class in Abkhazia enjoyed privilege and
566 power, the situation of the lower classes was one of great oppression; /19/ the batoni (master, feudal lord) looked upon his subject, his slave, as a commodity; he could sell or pawn him
[567] according to circumstances. However, even after the abolition of slavery, the position of the peasantry did not improve, due to
[579] the fact that the nobility did not cease from robbery and pillage and plunder until the most recent times.

565 Under such a state of affairs, all the peasantry could do
608 was to resign itself to feudal conditions and try, wherever possible, to get protection. The best method lay in the custom of adoption, or the rearing of the sons of the aristocrats by the peasants. Thanks to this custom, the aristocrats themselves were strengthened, for in this way they gained in the peasants their most faithful supporters, while at the same time freeing their wives from the onerous duty of bringing up and feeding their own children. This is the reason that in all Abkhazia there is not a single peasant who has not reared one or several princes and nobles; as a consequence of this custom, hardly one per cent of the nobles have been nursed at their own mother's breast.

Before the beginning of childbirth in a family of the aristocracy (didebuli), on the one hand relatives and acquaintances and, on the other hand, the future foster-mothers of the expected child, accompanied by their husbands and female relatives in order to be able to bear the newborn foster-child back to their village with due ceremony, begin to gather around the pregnant
844 woman. During the childbirth, girls from the village also come to
565 visit the expectant mother in order to distract her and to relieve
[533] her sufferings during labor with gay songs and the telling of fables
[538] and fairy tales. The husband is absent during this time. According to the customs of the country, he is not allowed to be present when his wife gives birth and therefore leaves the home. Above

/19 cont./

844 565 the bed of the expectant mother a cord is suspended from the ceiling, which she can grasp during the severe pains and spasms of childbirth. It is indecent for her to let her moans and screams reach the ears of her parents-in-law; she must staunchly bear her sufferings so as not to lose their respect forever. At last the child is delivered. The birth of a boy brings more joy to the [842] mother than the birth of a girl, as it gives her more respect and honor in the eyes of society, but she is not particularly saddened by the birth of a daughter either, for it still serves as proof of her fertility. The newborn child is left in the care of the wet nurse [608] (the wife of the foster father), and the female relatives congratu- [853] late the new mother on the happy /20/ outcome of the delivery. The mother, too, is happy, and most of all, of course, because with the passing of the baby into the care of others she herself will soon recover and, free from caring for it, can more easily preserve her beauty and freshness of face. In a few days her husband returns and in his turn congratulates her on the delivery of her child (1).

1. Cf. the excellent article, "Abkhazia," by K. Machavariani in the newspaper Iveriia, 1884, No. 275.

608 565 On the day set for the departure of the wet nurse with the newborn baby, the parents give a banquet and give her the materials for a dress, for underwear, and for all the appurtenances for the child's cradle, a copper kettle to bathe it in, and other small articles.

From this day on the foster mother receives the honorary title of anadzdzei (nurse, foster mother), and both she and her husband, the abadzdzei (foster father), are held in universal respect; upon its entry into the house of the foster father and mother, the baby is recognized as a ward (akhupha) of the family to which the foster father belongs.

The foster parents cherish the child in due fashion and maintain him in comfort and contentment. After two or three [431] years the child is taken to its parents, along with presents consisting of one or two bulls, a goat, capons, wine, bread, etc.

/20 cont./

565 608 In the house of the child's parents, another banquet is held, to which the neighbors are also invited. On this occasion all kinds of honors are shown to the foster mother and her husband. The foster parents are granted the right to be the first to wash their hands, and upon their return home the parents of the child must seat them on their horses, i.e., when they mount, the stirrups on the other side must be held. The foster parents return home with [431] the child, loaded with all kinds of presents, animals, clothes, money.

The foster child remains with the foster parents during the course of eight or nine years, and then it is taken to the real parents. It hardly need be said that the child, having spent its early years in someone else's home, where it grew up and learned to walk, talk, and to love its foster mother and those surroundings, now has difficulty in adjusting itself to the new situation -- at [154] first the father's house seems almost like a prison to him. For this reason the child is allowed to visit the foster parents frequently. If the foster child is an orphan, however, he remains in the home and under the care of his foster parents until he is married.

/21/ The foster child is obligated to defend the interests of the foster parents, i.e. of that family whose members reared him. He is required, for instance, to search for a lost article belonging to his foster parents, to find the thief and to call him to account, and it is a great disgrace to him if he is unable to do this. In the same way, if someone offends the foster parents and they are not strong enough to pay back the insult, their ward must stand up for them. Let us suppose, for instance, that some prince has beaten a peasant. In this case the ward of the injured peasant must de- [683] mand satisfaction, not from the princely offender himself, for "his blood is unequal to that of a peasant," but from his foster parent, a peasant, and he is the one who has to answer for the insult inflicted upon the foster parent of another prince. If a peasant foster-father gets into any kind of trouble, his princely ward endeavors by hook or by crook to rescue him from his difficulties. In such cases, if the ward himself is still immature and unable to help his foster parents, then his parents act in his place.

/21 cont./

565 608 This, however, does not exhaust the role of the ward with regard to his foster parent. He is the main character in the joys and sorrows of his foster parent; in all the occasions of his life that have any importance. Thus, when his foster mother, or her husband, or one of their children dies, he bewails them bitterly, [765] dresses in mourning, lets his hair grow, buys the coffin at his own [764] expense, and takes care of the arrangements and the ceremonial for the mourning and the funeral of the deceased. When the funeral banquet is given, he provides a sheep or a horse and again arranges everything. The ward also is the main character [583] when the son of his foster mother abducts a girl to be his wife; if the relatives of the girl pursue the abductor, the princely ward comes to his aid with words and weapons and does not give up the abducted girl; subsequently he keeps her at his house until the matter is definitely settled, for none of the relatives of the abducted girl would dare to attack his home.

If, on the other hand, the marriage of the son or daughter [584] of the foster father is arranged peacefully by the voluntary consent of both sides, then here, too, the princely ward is considered the bridegroom's best man and presents the bride with money, a horse, etc.

The foster parents in turn do not fail to perform their duties with regard to their ward, whom they call their sun, their /22/ sacredness, and by whose name they swear. Every year at [431] Christmastide they give him presents, such as cheese, capons, and bread; at Easter, a lamb or a kid and "chumukhkvati." These presents are the obligatory outward signs of sincere liking and friendship on the part of lesser ones ("lower brotherhood") towards those of higher rank; with their cessation the mutual friendship is also broken off.

The sons of the foster mother are usually the bosom friends [579] and accomplices of the ward in his nocturnal thieving adventures. That is why a prince or nobleman always takes the sons of his foster mother with him on his thieving expeditions; he knows that

/22 cont./

565 608 [579] [964] [965] [585] they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for him if necessary. When a ward dies, the grief and sorrow of the foster parents are unbounded; for his funeral they furnish a shroud and money; they also bring one or two bulls, sheep, etc. for the funeral repast for the deceased. When their ward marries, they give him all kinds of assistance through their personal labor. They also present him with fattened animals and bring presents to his bride as well.

608 565 796 Among the Abkhaz another type of wardship also exists, namely, that of an adult man being invited to assume the role of ward. The Abkhaz peasant invites such a man with the words, "I wish to take you into my house and honor you according to my means." On the appointed day, the person invited goes to the house of his future foster father and takes along a few additional people. During the supper the host and his relatives kneel down in front of their ward-to-be and give him a glass of wine; they then stand and one of them addresses to him the following speech: "From this day on we regard you as having been nursed in our family; we are of the same spirit as you and will begrudge you nothing; we hope that you, too, will begrudge us nothing; you will be held in higher esteem than the other wards." After this they present him with a few rubles and give something to his companions (khadzh /see foreign text/). While handing over the presents, they say, "Vadcha enup" (a present for you). This ceremony ends in the following way: on a carpet, spread on the floor, a chest is placed, on which the wife of the host of the house, i.e., the future foster mother, seats herself; the other women surround her. Then the ward-to-be enters through the open door, stands in front of the hostess seated on the chest, greets her, /23/ and thrice touches with his lips the nipple of her breast, or, as the Abkhaz say, "bites her nipples three times"; after each time he repeats, "from this day on you are my own mother." And indeed, from this time on exactly the same mutual relations obtain between them as in the first case where another's child is fully reared. It need hardly be said that, besides the princes and nobles, the

608 565

/23 cont./

608 peasants also rear the children of clergymen, of merchants, and
565 even of other peasants. There are also cases of even nobles taking in and rearing the sons of strong and influential princes on the same basis.

IV.

Marriage

583 Some fifteen years ago the groom usually abducted a girl for a wife; that is to say, without the consent of the girl's parents or her own consent, he carried out an attack upon her with the help of his comrades and led her away by force. Such cases are rare nowadays. On the contrary, abductions are now for the greater part carried out with the consent of the bride herself, though not infrequently against the will of her parents. In the latter case, the one chosen as a bride comes at night to a previously arranged place a few versts from the parental home. The groom comes to the same place with his comrades, on horses. She mounts a horse brought especially for her, and the whole cavalcade gallops back to the home of the groom or to that of some influential person. No pursuers are able to take the bride away from the abductors, for they are prepared, if necessary, to fight to the last drop of blood for her. Soon after the abduction the girl herself announces publicly that the abduction took place according to her personal wishes and that she can be happy only with her abductor. Mutual negotiations are now
[584] initiated and everything ends in peace; the son-in-law brings presents to the mother and the father of the bride, and the case is closed.

584 It must be noted that the Abkhaz never abducts a girl lower
583 in standing than himself. This would be considered a loss of
[558] honor for the abductor. On the contrary, everybody tries to abduct a girl of higher or at least equal birth. To propose to a
[154] girl and to receive a refusal either from her or from her parents

/53 cont./

782 and has been brought into the smithy, the blacksmith puts
326 all his instruments on the anvil; a brazier with coals is placed nearby and the whole family kneels down around the anvil. After taking off his bashlyk and his belt (as proof that he addresses Shasha with an open heart and mind), the smith lights a wax candle, throws incense on the coals of the brazier, and prays to Shasha to bless him and his family with good health and long life, and to make the instruments forged from iron do him good rather than harm. After all those present have pronounced "Amen" at the end of the prayer, the master of the house cuts pieces of the pie and of the organs roasted on the nut-wood spit and throws them on the brazier with the words: "Until that time when I am unable /54/ to feed with these little pieces all Shervashidzi and Anchabadzi, let no one in my family fall ill. I pray to you for this, Shasha, bringing to you a real sacrifice." The smith then cuts off just such little pieces from the other sacrifices and distributes them to all the members of the family, who eat them and wash them down with three swallows
[273] of wine. The host designates the wine for this repast immediately after the harvesting of the grapes and saves it in a separate jug called shẽsher gaphshi, buried in the smithy itself; under the fear of punishment by Shasha, no one dares to touch it, even in any extremity, before New Year's Eve, neither the host himself nor, all the more, one of the bystanders. Upon the completion of the praying, the prepared dishes are transferred to the house of the smith, where the neighbors gather and feast to the glory of Shasha until dawn.

782 Several princes also offer a prayer to Shasha on New
776 Year's Eve, in which case each of the persons present, having
● 565 been at one time dependent on these princes, brings a rooster. Shasha is one of those divinities called upon by the Abkhaz more often than others.

776 According to the understanding of the Abkhaz, the divinity whose name is called falsely immediately punishes the guilty one by those means or tools which are in the field of his specialty. Thus, for instance, one who has called

C [760 cont.]
565 and noblemen and who had thus [761] become noble themselves;
C and serfs (tšo'kŏtl). The last were either peasants and could not
[566] be sold individually, or they were servants and were sometimes freed (begaulia). The peasants had to attend to the needs and obligations of the nobles, and these to those of the princes, but in return received gifts from them. In the case of disputes and
C on important occasions, princes, noblemen, and respected peas-
[627] ants took council together. This feudal system was most highly
C developed in Kabarda, and the Kabardin were the teachers of the
[197] neighboring peoples as far as mode of living, horsemanship,
A dress, and weapons were concerned. A pronounced aristocratic
● [565] pride prevailed among the Cherkess, and their noblemen considered themselves as high as the princes of the Abkhaz and others. Therefore, at marriage the greatest weight was placed on equality of birth; sons of the princes by serf girls could become princes only through marriage with princesses, and then only princes of third degree.

C The Cherkess sold many of the serfs and slaves to Turkey,
439 where the Cherkess women were sought for their beauty; they
[567] were never daughters of the princes or noblemen, however, who
[565] were only to be won by their peers through marriage and bride price, but rather, except for personal slaves, they dealt in
C Abkhaz women and captives from the Cossacks and other enemy
560 peoples. Slaves could achieve freedom through marriage to a
591 Cherkess woman or through adoption; this was accomplished by having the slave, as mentioned above, suckle at the breast of the woman in question in the presence of the senior member of the kin group (cf. p. 76).

A Marriage. Up to fifty years ago among the Abkhaz the
583 young men, accompanied by friends, used to steal a girl of equal rank whom they desired as a wife. Today the abduction
A takes place by an understanding with the girl or her parents, but
[584] usually the suitor works through a mediator (dade) or female matchmaker and pays a purchase price, besides the reciprocal gifts. Refusal of the offer results in abduction or alienation of the kin group.

A After the betrothal banquet the groom remains for
585 three days in the bride's house or in the vicinity, but he may not

/18 cont./

III.

Education -- The Educated -- The Educators

565 While the upper class in Abkhazia enjoyed privilege and
566 power, the situation of the lower classes was one of great oppression; /19/ the batoni (master, feudal lord) looked upon his subject, his slave, as a commodity; he could sell or pawn him
[567] according to circumstances. However, even after the abolition of slavery, the position of the peasantry did not improve, due to
[579] the fact that the nobility did not cease from robbery and pillage and plunder until the most recent times.

565 Under such a state of affairs, all the peasantry could do
608 was to resign itself to feudal conditions and try, wherever possible, to get protection. The best method lay in the custom of adoption, or the rearing of the sons of the aristocrats by the peasants. Thanks to this custom, the aristocrats themselves were strengthened, for in this way they gained in the peasants their most faithful supporters, while at the same time freeing their wives from the onerous duty of bringing up and feeding their own children. This is the reason that in all Abkhazia there is not a single peasant who has not reared one or several princes and nobles; as a consequence of this custom, hardly one per cent of the nobles have been nursed at their own mother's breast.

Before the beginning of childbirth in a family of the aristocracy (didebuli), on the one hand relatives and acquaintances and, on the other hand, the future foster-mothers of the expected child, accompanied by their husbands and female relatives in order to be able to bear the newborn foster-child back to their village with due ceremony, begin to gather around the pregnant
844 woman. During the childbirth, girls from the village also come to
565 visit the expectant mother in order to distract her and to relieve
[533] her sufferings during labor with gay songs and the telling of fables
[538] and fairy tales. The husband is absent during this time. According to the customs of the country, he is not allowed to be present when his wife gives birth and therefore leaves the home. Above

/18 cont./

III.

Education -- The Educated -- The Educators

565 While the upper class in Abkhazia enjoyed privilege and
566 power, the situation of the lower classes was one of great oppression; /19/ the batoni (master, feudal lord) looked upon his subject, his slave, as a commodity; he could sell or pawn him
[567] according to circumstances. However, even after the abolition of slavery, the position of the peasantry did not improve, due to
[579] the fact that the nobility did not cease from robbery and pillage and plunder until the most recent times.

565 Under such a state of affairs, all the peasantry could do
608 was to resign itself to feudal conditions and try, wherever possible, to get protection. The best method lay in the custom of adoption, or the rearing of the sons of the aristocrats by the peasants. Thanks to this custom, the aristocrats themselves were strengthened, for in this way they gained in the peasants their most faithful supporters, while at the same time freeing their wives from the onerous duty of bringing up and feeding their own children. This is the reason that in all Abkhazia there is not a single peasant who has not reared one or several princes and nobles; as a consequence of this custom, hardly one per cent of the nobles have been nursed at their own mother's breast.

Before the beginning of childbirth in a family of the aristocracy (didebuli), on the one hand relatives and acquaintances and, on the other hand, the future foster-mothers of the expected child, accompanied by their husbands and female relatives in order to be able to bear the newborn foster-child back to their village with due ceremony, begin to gather around the pregnant
844 woman. During the childbirth, girls from the village also come to
565 visit the expectant mother in order to distract her and to relieve
[533] her sufferings during labor with gay songs and the telling of fables
[538] and fairy tales. The husband is absent during this time. According to the customs of the country, he is not allowed to be present when his wife gives birth and therefore leaves the home. Above

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

796 I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family,
539 being angry with her masters, took a portion of the dough for *akwakwàr*
[567] destined for the "god" *Got'anùa*, and placing it in a scoop of bitter-gourd (*akwapey*, Geo. *kope*), hid it in the loft. As usual the family went to bed after the ceremony. But unfortunately for them the offended *Got'anùa* soundly thrashed all of them, using for the purpose the very same scoop in which had been hidden the dough destined for himself. This *gvari* makes propitiatory offerings at the will of sorcerers to *Got'anùa* twice a year, during the night before Christmas and before the Assumption.

Got'anùa, under the name of *Okhvàmuri*, evidently spread throughout Megrelia during the missionaryship of Lamberti.[1]

V. Deities whose Cults have no Fixed Dates

1. *Et-nɔ̀kha—Àga-nɔ̀kha*

776 The sea, like other manifestations of nature, has its own "part
[823] of deity", called *Àga-inkhwɔ̀* or *àga-intswakhwɔ̀*. An Abkhaz makes an
[782] offering to this deity when he goes to the sea coast for any considerable time. The sea deity is not to be trifled with; if it is slighted it becomes turbulent, it surges, and punishes the unrespectful. Therefore even the children are forbidden to throw pebbles, or to spit into the sea. The worship of this deity has been preserved in its purest form among the Bzib Abkhasians, namely among the peasantry of the Gudout (Gudaut) district, of the *gvari* of Amp'aràa. It has been described by A. Tch(ukbar), in *Sotrudnik Zakavkazskoy Missii* ("The Collabarator of the Transcaucasian Mission"), 1912, p. 373 sqq., where the deity *Et-nɔ̀kh-Àga-nɔ̀kha* is called *Et-nykh Ag-Nykh*. *Àga* denotes sea, (*a*)*nɔ̀kh*—"icon." But what does the word *Et* denote?[2]

2. *Àshkha-intswakhwɔ̀* (god of mountains)

Mountains also have "their part of God" known under the name
[803] of *Àshkha-intswakhwɔ̀*. *Àshkha* denotes mountain; *intswakhwɔ̀*, "his (of the male rational being) part of God." I have pointed out above that the Abkhaz often uses the word *nɔ̀kha* in the sense of god, which in the Christian faith is understood, or more correctly, translated, as icon. The god of mountains "governs" all the mountains and the beasts inhabiting them. Abkhaz shepherds make offerings to this
[233] god twice a year, in the spring when they drive the cattle to the mountains, and in the autumn when they drive them back. To him
[825] are subject also mountain game. In order to preserve the game from

[1] A. Lamberti, op. cit., pp. 148–9.
[2] This word manifests a consonance with the Assyro-Babylonian name of the god of the sea, *Ea*. Is this a mere coincidence?

/12 cont./

687 426 If the blood-price was not paid within a certain period, then at the end of the year, in place of a debt of four spans, five were owed, in place of five, six, and six became seven, so that an already considerable debt increased still more and weighed like a heavy burden on the shoulders of the debtor. But the Abkhaz had one excellent custom -- that of coming to the aid of an insolvent debtor. All the latter had to do was to announce that he "owed for blood," and everybody contributed his mite to pay off the debt.

796 687 608 The following ceremony was considered the best way to a complete reconciliation of the parties involved in a blood-feud. A relative of the killer gave a banquet and, through intermediaries, invited the claimant of blood himself or his son. It was sufficient to persuade the claimant of blood to touch his lips to the breast of the wife or mother of the debtor, and, as a result of this action alone, everlasting and indissoluble peace would be restored between them. If, on the other hand, the blood-avenger would not be appeased and would not come to the feast, then those acting for the other side endeavored to abduct the son or some other close relative of the claimant or in some other way get such a person into their house. If they succeeded, then peace was restored whether the avenger liked it or not, for to kill the foster father was considered a violation and desecration of the "breast" and 186 beneath the dignity of a brave man. Love of homeland is developed to the highest degree in the Abkhaz. Some peoples say, ubi bene, ibi patria, but the Abkhaz, on the other hand, prays: "There is no better place in the world than Abkhazia. God, save Abkhazia." In both grief and happiness alike, the Abkhaz repeats this prayer.

574 As is the case with all ancient peoples, hospitality is piously honored and maintained in Abkhazia. The Abkhaz is convinced that every guest is accompanied by seven "baraka" (blessing, /13/ bliss, abundance), one of which remains with the host, and God gives back to the guest this seventh baraka. Even the poorest Abkhaz does his utmost to treat his guest as well as possible; when an Abkhaz sees a traveler going along the village

/13 cont./

574 road in the evening, he immediately greets him, "bziala vahbeit" -- "it is good to see you!" Then he invites the traveler into his house; "Come in and rest, where are you going now? Spend the night in our house, and early in the morning go your way." If the traveler, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, accepts the invitation and puts up at the host's house, he receives a warm reception and is wonderfully well regaled. And if the traveler does not accept the invitation, he replies, "ubeikht" (grow rich, thank you) and continues on his way. The custom of hospitality protects the traveler even from blood-vengeance. Once he is someone's guest, no one has the right to touch him.

181 888 Along with his hospitality and generosity, the Abkhaz is also courteous, polite, and respectful, especially to older persons. Here are a few examples.

515 576 [264] Before taking any food the Abkhaz usually wash their hands. But the washing is performed in order of seniority, the ablution of the hands beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest of those attending the banquet. The same order is observed in drinking wine. But on such occasions the oldest person does not lag behind either. In the beginning he renounces his right of priority and invites the person next in rank to drink wine or to wash his hands first. This is required by the custom of courtesy and politeness. But, of course, the younger person flatly refuses the honor offered him. Finally, after many mutual compliments and words of persuasion, the first one (the oldest) accepts the invitation after all. Then the same ceremony is gone through between the second and the third, the third and the fourth, and so on, down to the youngest person attending. Furthermore, while the oldest persons are washing their hands, the younger ones are obliged to remain standing. Here again there is ceremony, exhortations for them to sit down, but if those who are urged to do so ignore these exhortations and continue to stand, then the older person considers it improper to

576 wash his hands sitting down, and he also stands up. The question of which of two persons shall first cross the threshold and

/23 cont./

584 583 54 is considered a mortal insult; /24/ in this case abduction is considered the only way of satisfying one's injured self-esteem. But usually marriage negotiations are conducted in Abkhazia by female matchmakers or by intermediaries. If they bring the matter to a happy conclusion, their labors are rewarded with the [465] heads and hides of the oxen that are butchered for the wedding. As soon as a mutual understanding has been reached, the bride and groom, after an exchange of presents, set a day for a meeting.

At the designated time, the groom and his friends set out, with presents, for the house of the parents of the bride. A [583] princely groom sometimes brings as many as 20 or 30 horses, of which many are saddled. Now a feast is held at the groom's • [574] expense. During the banquet the friends of the groom, on the one hand, and those invited by the bride's parents, on the other, try in all possible ways to outdo each other in witticisms, puns, eloquence, in the amount of wine consumed, in singing, etc. The next day the comrades of the groom receive various presents and the groom himself receives a horse, or money and arms. Then the comrades return home, while the son-in-law remains in the house of the bride's parents with his delegate (dade).

But the future son-in-law still feels extremely ill at ease. According to the custom of the country, he may not yet show himself to the parents of the bride or their relatives. He is wrapped in a burka, and his head and face are wrapped in a bashlyk, under which only his eyes are barely visible. On the first night, during the feast, he hides himself somewhere outside and spends the night in a neighboring house. On the next day he is forcibly taken to the bride's house. But even now he does not dare to sit down and remains standing by the door, leaving it to his delegate to speak for him. In general it is not [606] proper for the young son-in-law to eat with his parents-in-law, or sometimes even to sit down with them at the table. In some places, husband and wife never appear together before the wife's parents. This is considered shameful.

The bride takes up residence in a small house (amhara),

/26 cont./

602 avoids pronouncing the name of his wife. When the wife's father
[606] and mother first visit their son-in-law, he must offer them presents in the same way as when he himself with his wife first visits the wife's parents.

V.

Mourning and Burial of the Dead

758
574 In general the Abkhaz are very compassionate towards the sick and never leave alone a person who is seriously ill. When the villagers are informed that one of their number is seriously ill, all of them without fail will visit him, inquire about his illness, encourage him, and try to cheer him. The patient is visited not only by his relatives, but also by all the other villagers, irrespective of their title or means. They usually come to visit the patient in the evening and spend the whole night with him, singing, dancing, or telling stories, making jokes, etc., with the object of somehow /27/ cheering the invalid and relieving his sufferings in one way or another. The sick are treated with home remedies, old wise-women say prayers over them, etc.

763 As soon as a patient dies, the women instantly break out in deafening wails and soul-shaking screams, at the same time tearing out their hair, scratching their bodies, beating themselves on the face and head, and so on. Meanwhile the whole
764 neighborhood gathers, and the weeping and sobbing increase. Some women closely related to the deceased begin to beat themselves, striking their heads against something or other; the others try to soothe and quiet them. But all these admonitions frequently have no effect on the frenzied mourners, who, as a result of the blows they have inflicted upon their own heads and bodies and of beating their heads against something, fall down as if dead. When quiet finally prevails, the funeral ceremony is arranged. The next of kin sew themselves mourning apparel,
[203] and messengers are sent out with notices and invitations to the relatives, foster parents, friends, and acquaintances of the deceased; his fellow villagers on the other hand are obliged

/50 cont./

782 On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when
733 the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and
[796] when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder-
[562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

782 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is
731 offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the
789 herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre-
[533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva rysshva
[821] and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second, to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one
782 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, re-
731 minding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the
574 blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

/51 cont./

782 one of those present begins to glorify the god: "Anchva
731 dukhva zlyphkha khkhaura!" "O you who descends from
574 heaven with lightning and ascend to heaven with thunder, who knows the number of the stars in heaven and of the sands at the bottom of the sea ." etc., and he concludes the poem with the words, "akhdau." All those present, divided into two groups, repeat every line of the hymn in turn, always three times over.

782 The killing of one of the herd by lightning unfailingly
821 evokes prayer to Aphi; on the other hand, if he is not appeased by sacrifice, a repetition of his visit must be expected. The owner of the dead animal invites the inhabitants of the village, without distinction as to age or sex. On the spot where the animal was killed, a tower is built about one and a half sagene in height, so that beasts of prey cannot climb it. All those present surround the killed animal, join hands, and dance, half of them singing "Voetla" and the other half answering "Chaupar," and they raise the animal onto the tower, still singing and dancing, and leave it there as a victim for the birds of prey. Then the owner of the animal killed by lightning sacrifices a bull to Aphi, at the same time thanking him for the present visit and begging him nonetheless to spare him future visits. Various dishes are prepared from the meat of the sacrificed animal; bread, cheese, and wine are brought, and those present feast all day long at the expense of the man who suffered the loss. The day the animal was killed by lightning becomes so memorable in the family that has thus been visited by Aphi that

[527] neither the head of the family /52/ nor his children will give
[431] anyone anything on the anniversary of that day, saying that they expect a visit from Aphi on that day.

[766] The same ceremony is performed when a person has been struck by lightning. During the dance around the corpse, none of the relatives of the dead man dares to weep; otherwise all the participants will be struck dead by a thunder-bolt.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Alzvibzha

thy heart! Grant us such a crop of maize that at its gathering we shall have to bend the stalks with a hook (Geo. *Kavi*), and cut them down with a bill!" *K'uarpa* (*a-k'warpá*) is then spilled, and the cattle is called by shouting *wootsw*. *Andp'a-nàga* is the harvest god. In my opinion the etymology of these words is as follows: *Ap'ará* denotes "to twist or twine" something (a rope, for example), as well as "to pass with difficulty through something", for instance, a maize or millet field, crowd, etc.; *nágara*—to carry: *inap'òo indgo*—carriest thou by forcing thy way, by pushing asunder.

There is also an evil spirit of the harvest called *Jaja*, but we will speak of her (she is a goddess) separately, as she is not a member of this septenary.

(*g*) *Atchshò-shyashyàna* (god of horses).

Finally, the supplicant takes the cake whose shape represents a horse (or three *á-khwazhwa*), and entreats (the god) *Atchshò shyashyàna* —the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, to increase his horses (donkeys and asses). Again *wootsw* and *ak'warpá*. The word *atchshò* denotes horse; *shwyashyàna* or *shashana* is incomprehensible.

With this ceremonial *Àyt'ar-nòhwa* ends.

Judging from what has already been said above, it is clear that *Àyt'ar* is the head of a whole pleiade of gods, each of whom constitute a special part of him; it is noteworthy that in every supplication addressed to any one of these gods, *Àyt'ar* is also invariably referred to as one whose part is the deity in question. The religio-philosophical mind of the Abkhasians has arranged the hierarchy of these gods in the following order:—

ÀYT'AR: JABRÀN, ZHWABRÀN, ALÀSHKINTR, ÀMZA, ÀMRA, ANÀP'A-NÀGA; AND ÀTCHSHÒ-SHYASHYÀNA.

Àyt'ar is one in seven parts. This conception of God in parts is prominently expressed in *Àyt'ar*.

(*h*) *Lòmilaà* (*Nòmiraà* or *Shòmiraà*).

Àyt'ar-nòhwa ends with *Lòmilaà*. What this word denotes is difficult to explain. It appears to denote the god of conjugal happiness of the youth.

On the same evening, after the conclusion of *Àyt'ar-nòhwa*, the young people, boys and girls, meet at one of their houses, and begin to predict their fortunes. It is a time of laughter and gaiety, and the young people enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. *A-kwakwàr* of usual size is prepared in great quantities; and also enough of a smaller size, extremely salt in flavour, to enable each participant to have three. In one of these small *akwakwàr* is placed a hazel chip, called *ànasp'adsw*, "stake of happiness." Each person is given three

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

small salt *akwakwàr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Làmilaĥ* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Làmilaĥ* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwàr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyobir* (in Geo. *riktap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abala*.

[1] *Anasp'a dsw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dsadsola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *migheburi dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-satskhola*. The word *a-baia*, in Abkhasian *a-màrtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik ledbi*.

/13 cont./

574 road in the evening, he immediately greets him, "bziala vahbeit" -- "it is good to see you!" Then he invites the traveler into his house; "Come in and rest, where are you going now? Spend the night in our house, and early in the morning go your way." If the traveler, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, accepts the invitation and puts up at the host's house, he receives a warm reception and is wonderfully well regaled. And if the traveler does not accept the invitation, he replies, "ubeikht" (grow rich, thank you) and continues on his way. The custom of hospitality protects the traveler even from blood-vengeance. Once he is someone's guest, no one has the right to touch him.

181 888 Along with his hospitality and generosity, the Abkhaz is also courteous, polite, and respectful, especially to older persons. Here are a few examples.

515 516 [264] Before taking any food the Abkhaz usually wash their hands. But the washing is performed in order of seniority, the ablution of the hands beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest of those attending the banquet. The same order is observed in drinking wine. But on such occasions the oldest person does not lag behind either. In the beginning he renounces his right of priority and invites the person next in rank to drink wine or to wash his hands first. This is required by the custom of courtesy and politeness. But, of course, the younger person flatly refuses the honor offered him. Finally, after many mutual compliments and words of persuasion, the first one (the oldest) accepts the invitation after all. Then the same ceremony is gone through between the second and the third, the third and the fourth, and so on, down to the youngest person attending. Furthermore, while the oldest persons are washing their hands, the younger ones are obliged to remain standing. Here again there is ceremony, exhortations for them to sit down, but if those who are urged to do so ignore these exhortations and continue to stand, then the older person considers it improper to 576 wash his hands sitting down, and he also stands up. The question of which of two persons shall first cross the threshold and

/13 cont./

576 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a [608] long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge [755] mtsuge seizgat," i.e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging 181 the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children [565] of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, [411] dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the [293] constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

526 Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games [541] are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 538 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

they, therefore, take precautionary measures to avoid becoming victims of the malignant will of the evil spirits. Nothing is left outside the house, or in the courtyard; nobody sleeps out of doors. To safeguard themselves from evil spirits, the superstitious attach pieces of wax to their hair. Crosses are made from *a-lakwə̀mha* (Geo. *lekumkha*),[1] to which are appended acanthus leaves, and these are placed at the courtyard gates, house doors, the gates of the kitchen gardens and cornfields, the poultry and cow-houses, etc. Acanthus leaves are hung around the necks of the domestic animals. The Abkhaz is convinced that *dwyəst'aă* dare not approach these crosses, which are also a protection against evil eyes.

During this night the evil spirits go out to look for booty, under the leadership of their mother, *Arapàp* (Meg. *rokapi*). On this expedition they are joined by human beings in whom evil spirits have taken their abode. Some of these evil spirits ride wolves or cats, and devour all the animals left outside by their owners who had no time, or had forgotten to drive them into shelter.[2] All evil spirits without exception stir abroad during this night; they wander growling from village to village and through the forests. For this reason it is easy to find out and catch them, and with this object youths go into the woods, where they make a large fire, using the wood of *a-lakwə̀mha*. The youngsters hide behind the bushes and watch out to see if they can recognize those of their neighbours into whom an evil spirit has entered. It is believed that the demons never pass a bonfire without stopping and warming themselves a little by it. Often quarrels arise on this ground, with unpleasant consequences. This custom of seeking after the evil spirits, "demons," is called *Awyəst'aă lə̀khəra*, which denotes "the catching of the demon"; it is also known under the Megrelian name of *dchindchat'oba*. To this day an Abkhaz believes that an evil spirit can enter into, and remain in, a human body, particularly in that of an old woman.

The chief *dwyəst'aă* is the eldest son of the sister of God, and that is why He, being a blood relation, cannot destroy him, although he may frighten him off with thunder. Here it will be appropriate to quote the following popular story:—

"At the time of the partition of the work between God and the devil, the former, exercising the right of seniority,[3] suggested to the devil that they should divide the world between them. The latter

[1] The Russian *krushina*, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, that is, *alaternus* (R. Eristov mentions the plant *lshukha*, but he does not explain it. Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*).

[2] To safeguard an animal from wild beasts when he strays in the forest, they "bind the mouth" of the wild animals as follows: a pair of scissors is tied and a suitable prayer is uttered. "A sure remedy."

[3] The younger divides, and the elder chooses.

/7 cont./

127 Droeba, 1884-1885; 3. "Ocherk Abkhazskoy mifologii /Sketch of Abkhaz Mythology/," by verovaniya abkhaztsev /Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A., in the Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh, No. V; and 5. "Ekonomicheskoe polozhenie tuzemnago naseleniya Sukhumskago otdiela /The Economic Condition of the Native Population of the Sukhum District/," same author, in the same Sbornik, VI.

M. Dzhanashvili. April 25, 1892, Tiflis.

/8/

ooo

I.

Abkhazia and the Abkhaz

The Abkhaz -- His Character -- Robberies, Raids, and Thieving -- Eloquence of the Abkhaz -- Blood Vengeance -- Love of Homeland -- Hospitality, Politeness, and Friendliness -- Honesty -- Values -- Folk Games -- Poetry.

142 The Abkhaz is a mountaineer of medium stature, slender, swarthy, with black hair and eyes. He is fearless, brave, and
181 proud, but at the same time capricious and extremely quick-tempered. Besides his inborn giftedness, his beauty, and, in general, the likeable aspects of his character, he also exhibits quite a few negative traits, of which we shall speak below.

• 579 Since the most ancient times the Abkhaz have been known as the most fearless and daring of robbers. They constantly raided their neighbors, pillaging and ruining them. For that matter, the habit of robbing and raiding is common to all the mountaineers in general. "Without robbery and raids, life is not worth living to a mountaineer," says Sergei Mech in his work. All his poetry, all the beauty of his existence is in this trait of the mountaineer. Only the tiger can be compared to the mountaineer in the suddenness and swiftness of his attack on a sleeping village in the deep, dark night. Going for plunder, the mountaineer is sure that

/8 cont./

579 nothing will give him away or betray him, neither his dagger, always kept in a sheath, nor the glitter of his rifle, wrapped in a cover, nor the soft, inaudible steps of his feet outfitted in bast shoes, nor his horse, well-trained for night-riding, nor, finally, his tongue, the hissing sounds of which resemble the rustling of leaves... With bloodshot eyes, his dagger in one hand and his pistol in the other, the mountaineer throws himself into the battle with a frightful whoop, and at this moment he forgets everything but victory... Such are the Abkhaz and their neighbors.

Even now the Abkhaz looks upon thieving as an act of boldness, of heroism, /9/ and almost as much of a necessity as food and drink. All the Abkhaz, from the small to the great, suffer equally from this ailment -- men, women, and children, and the Abkhazian upper class have even made it their regular occupation. Times and circumstances change, generation after [198] generation slowly but steadily introduces new cultural principles into Abkhaz life -- and robbery alone remains the favorite occupation, as though hallowed by the authority of a hoary antiquity...

867 As a matter of fact, what is surprising about it? While still a child, the Abkhaz is subjected to the irresistible influence of the circumstances surrounding him and of all possible elemental forces. And as he grows up, he acts according to these external elemental influences or internal moral influences. Now, to what forces is the Abkhaz exposed in his youth, and what moral principles does he derive from the phenomena and facts of nature and the milieu around him?... There he is, as a child, holding in his hand a knife with a handle bigger than he is, pasturing buffalo or goats in the forest or in the mountains, and he observes what goes on before his eyes: here a fox, lying in wait for a careless wild chicken, catches its prey and carries it into the depths of the forest to finish it off; there a half-starved wolf snatches a lamb from the herd, under the eyes of the unwary shepherd -- a boy like himself; and there, farther away, a bird of prey, waiting until the right moment, shoots down like an arrow upon one of the weaker forest-dwellers and, sinking its claws into its body, flies up with its prey and disappears into

/9 cont./

867 the blue skies... and so it is, day after day. These very same examples of unpunished robbery and violence, repeated daily, must leave deep traces in the conscience of the observant young shepherd. Upon his return home, phenomena he has observed in nature are consolidated and, as it were, sanctified in his eyes by the authority of the older members of the family: every day there are discussions and squabbles about the loss or stealing of cattle; on the one hand, he hears words of praise and approval applied to stealing, and, on the other hand, curses addressed to the thief; finally he sees how the housewife, the lawfulness of whose behavior he has never once thought of doubting, very cautiously digs up the buried meat of an animal stolen from the neighbors and cooks it... And when the child, grown wise by
867 observing his mileu and by the successful experiences of his
579 relatives, /10/ matures into a grown youth, his parents and the leading members of the family in general provide him with arms, having given him their blessing beforehand with the words: "Now make your own living, make your fortune by thievery and robbery, the same as all the people your age." Hence, thievery here has not only the status of an example worthy to be followed when the proper occasion presents itself; it is presented as an obligatory modus vivendi, as a dogma, sanctioned by the authority of the parents and of the older members of the family in general.

867 Let us turn our attention to still another circumstance. As
579 is well known, children love fairy tales and all kinds of stories
538 and legends. In the long winter nights, the old men and women tell stories to the Abkhaz children. But the majority of such tales are likewise harmful from the point of view of moral influence, for the contents of these legends, fairy tales, and stories go no further than eulogies of stealing, robbery, and raiding; in them are sung the praises of the daring, determination, and bravery of some "abrag" (abrek = bandit), of his resourcefulness as a thief, his keen-wittedness when in difficulties, his audacity in robbing and seizing another man's property. This may provide a partial explanation of the regrettable phenomenon in the life of the Abkhaz, that even persons who have had a modicum of secondary education

/10 cont./

867 immediately upon their return home revert to the practice ac-
579 quired in childhood -- stealing. This is of course not the fault of the school or of secondary education, but of the traditional views on this "trade," contact with which kills every other way of looking at it, as the lone wheat-stalk is smothered among the weeds that surround it.

579 In his stealing, the Abkhaz is treacherous. The best of friends, to all appearances, do not hesitate to steal from each other, and in Abkhazia it is no rare thing for brother to steal from brother, father from son, or son from father. It is almost proverbial that when an Abkhaz has no one to steal from, he robs himself. There have been instances of an Abkhaz stealing a horse from a neighbor on a dark night, taking it miles and miles away and exchanging it for another, riding back home on this fresh horse the same night, and the next morning, the minute his neighbor raised the alarm, rushing over and being the first to offer his sympathy and joining the chorus of people calling down curses on the thief and dashing off with the others in frenzied pursuit.

685 The Abkhaz thief will not admit his crime, even /11/ when
579 he could be convicted on the evidence of witnesses. When a
692 robbery case is tried at village meetings, a decision of the judge in favor of the accused is not infrequently influenced by the audacity of the latter's pretexts, by his shameless subterfuges, and by his so-called "talking circles around them." In general at such
[537] meetings, any exhibition of sly rhetoric, however shameless, on the part of a notorious thief finds not only attentive listeners but even admirers. "He saved himself by the bravery of his speech," they say in such cases.

And though such "eloquence" on the part of the thief often saves the guilty one from punishment, the victim, understandably, does not believe in his innocence and tries to get back at him at the proper moment for his losses, according to the formula of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

682 At present vengeance for spilled blood is on the wane, but at one time it was one of the most important features of Abkhaz life. The custom of blood-revenge puts the relatives of a person

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 462 [565]

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, [535] funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men and dance with them. There have been instances of women [579] being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

562 586 [692]

If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

/18 cont./

III.

Education -- The Educated -- The Educators

565 While the upper class in Abkhazia enjoyed privilege and
566 power, the situation of the lower classes was one of great oppression; /19/ the batoni (master, feudal lord) looked upon his
[567] subject, his slave, as a commodity; he could sell or pawn him according to circumstances. However, even after the abolition
[579] of slavery, the position of the peasantry did not improve, due to the fact that the nobility did not cease from robbery and pillage and plunder until the most recent times.

565 Under such a state of affairs, all the peasantry could do
608 was to resign itself to feudal conditions and try, wherever possible, to get protection. The best method lay in the custom of adoption, or the rearing of the sons of the aristocrats by the peasants. Thanks to this custom, the aristocrats themselves were strengthened, for in this way they gained in the peasants their most faithful supporters, while at the same time freeing their wives from the onerous duty of bringing up and feeding their own children. This is the reason that in all Abkhazia there is not a single peasant who has not reared one or several princes and nobles; as a consequence of this custom, hardly one per cent of the nobles have been nursed at their own mother's breast.

Before the beginning of childbirth in a family of the aristocracy (didebuli), on the one hand relatives and acquaintances and, on the other hand, the future foster-mothers of the expected child, accompanied by their husbands and female relatives in order to be able to bear the newborn foster-child back to their village with due ceremony, begin to gather around the pregnant
344 woman. During the childbirth, girls from the village also come to
565 visit the expectant mother in order to distract her and to relieve
[533] her sufferings during labor with gay songs and the telling of fables
[538] and fairy tales. The husband is absent during this time. According to the customs of the country, he is not allowed to be present when his wife gives birth and therefore leaves the home. Above

/21 cont./

565 608 This, however, does not exhaust the role of the ward with regard to his foster parent. He is the main character in the joys and sorrows of his foster parent; in all the occasions of his life that have any importance. Thus, when his foster mother, or her [765] husband, or one of their children dies, he bewails them bitterly, dresses in mourning, lets his hair grow, buys the coffin at his own [764] expense, and takes care of the arrangements and the ceremonial for the mourning and the funeral of the deceased. When the funeral banquet is given, he provides a sheep or a horse and again arranges everything. The ward also is the main character [583] when the son of his foster mother abducts a girl to be his wife; if the relatives of the girl pursue the abductor, the princely ward comes to his aid with words and weapons and does not give up the abducted girl; subsequently he keeps her at his house until the matter is definitely settled, for none of the relatives of the abducted girl would dare to attack his home.

If, on the other hand, the marriage of the son or daughter [584] of the foster father is arranged peacefully by the voluntary consent of both sides, then here, too, the princely ward is considered the bridegroom's best man and presents the bride with money, a horse, etc.

The foster parents in turn do not fail to perform their duties with regard to their ward, whom they call their sun, their /22/ sacredness, and by whose name they swear. Every year at [431] Christmastide they give him presents, such as cheese, capons, and bread; at Easter, a lamb or a kid and "chumukhkvati." These presents are the obligatory outward signs of sincere liking and friendship on the part of lesser ones ("lower brotherhood") towards those of higher rank; with their cessation the mutual friendship is also broken off.

The sons of the foster mother are usually the bosom friends [579] and accomplices of the ward in his nocturnal thieving adventures. That is why a prince or nobleman always takes the sons of his foster mother with him on his thieving expeditions; he knows that

/22 cont./

565 they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for him if necessary.
608
[579] When a ward dies, the grief and sorrow of the foster parents
[764] are unbounded; for his funeral they furnish a shroud and money;
[765] they also bring one or two bulls, sheep, etc. for the funeral repast for the deceased. When their ward marries, they give
[585] him all kinds of assistance through their personal labor. They also present him with fattened animals and bring presents to his bride as well.

608 Among the Abkhaz another type of wardship also exists,
565 namely, that of an adult man being invited to assume the role
796 of ward. The Abkhaz peasant invites such a man with the words, "I wish to take you into my house and honor you according to my means." On the appointed day, the person invited goes to the house of his future foster father and takes along a few additional people. During the supper the host and his relatives kneel down in front of their ward-to-be and give him a glass of wine; they then stand and one of them addresses to him the following speech: "From this day on we regard you as having been nursed in our family; we are of the same spirit as you and will begrudge you nothing; we hope that you, too, will begrudge us nothing; you will be held in higher esteem than the other wards." After this they present him with a few rubles and give something to his companions (khadzh /see foreign text/). While handing over the presents, they say, "Vadcha enup" (a present for you). This ceremony ends in the following way: on a carpet, spread on the floor, a chest is placed, on which the wife of the host of the house, i.e., the future foster mother, seats herself; the other women surround her. Then the ward-to-be enters through the open door, stands in front of the hostess seated on the chest, greets her, /23/ and thrice touches with his lips the nipple of her breast, or, as the Abkhaz say, "bites her nipples three times"; after each time he repeats, "from this day on you are my own mother." And indeed, from
608 this time on exactly the same mutual relations obtain between
565 them as in the first case where another's child is fully reared. It need hardly be said that, besides the princes and nobles, the

/55.cont./

[755] [782] [326] sick man's accuser, taking off his belt to bear witness to the sincerity of his address to Shasha, approaches the anvil and utters a prayer in which he requests Shasha to deliver the guilty one from his ailment, with a pledge that after his recovery the sick man will come himself to beg for forgiveness from Shasha; then, leaving a piece of iron in the smithy, he goes to set the patient's mind at reast. If the sick man recovers, he satisfies the injured one and goes with him to the smithy, and, having put a small silver coin (no less than two rubles) on the anvil, thanks Shasha for his recovery; the ram, the bread, and the wine that he has brought with him are given to the blacksmith, from whom, after the prayer, he receives pieces of the ram's liver and heart; he sends these to his family as a token of Shasha's forgiveness. In company with his relatives, the injured party, and the blacksmith, he himself eats the food that was brought along in the blacksmith's house.

21.

The Prayer to Eyrig-aatsnykh

[779] [782] [776] [778] Eyrig-aatsnykh is the patron of stealing, plundering, and robbery. Beyond the river Bzyb this deity is called Chugurukhnykh; all the Abkhaz setting out to steal among the Ubykh, Shapsug, and other mountain-dwellers used to bring offerings to Chugurukhnykh, whose altar, if this expression may be used here, /56/ was located on a cliff beyond the fortification of Gagra. Prayers to this god are offered only by those who practice the "arts" of which he is the patron. An offering of four cone-shaped loaves of bread is brought; a prayer is said over them, asking a blessing upon the enterprise and giving a promise to sacrifice something else to the god in case of success. The loaves of bread are taken along on the trip. The thank-offering consists of something of the stolen goods, and if a horse or a head of cattle is taken, the sacrifice consists of a lock of the stolen animal's hair;

/56 cont./

•579 782 all this is hung on trees near the place where Eyrig-aatsnykh is believed to have his permanent abode.

22.

Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh

776 [778] Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh is worshiped as the mightiest of the gods. Mt. Dudryuphsh is regarded as his abode. Those who dare to climb this mountain are immediately punished with blindness; therefore prayers and sacrifices to this deity are offered at the foot of the mountain. As a deity, Anybs-nykha has no exclusive, professional field of authority, but he is worshiped as higher and mightier than all the other gods. [782] The arrangement of prayers and sacrifices to him is the same as to Sha-sha, with the difference that when an oath is taken in his name, the formula is "May Anybs-nykha send me blindness and every ailment . . ., "etc.

778 [923] Anybs-nykha's residence is under the exclusive supervision of the large Abkhaz family Ankhaĕ-Chichba. The Chichba have enjoyed this right for several generations; it is a source of great profit to them, since permission to bring sacrifices to this deity must be bought from them with presents. Not far from the top of Mt. Dudryuphsh, the actual abode of Anybs-nykha, a stone lies under an oak; on this stone the image of the Holy Virgin has been carved. All those who [782] take an oath must put a coin or something metal under this stone, and woe to him who is tempted to take anything away, even one little thing, from among the objects lying there!

23.

/57/ Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

782 [796] [262] On Christmas Eve in every family chickens are killed and four kvakvari (small loaves of bread stuffed with cheese)

/21 cont./

565 608 This, however, does not exhaust the role of the ward with regard to his foster parent. He is the main character in the joys and sorrows of his foster parent; in all the occasions of his life that have any importance. Thus, when his foster mother, or her [765] husband, or one of their children dies, he bewails them bitterly, dresses in mourning, lets his hair grow, buys the coffin at his own [764] expense, and takes care of the arrangements and the ceremonial for the mourning and the funeral of the deceased. When the funeral banquet is given, he provides a sheep or a horse and again arranges everything. The ward also is the main character [583] when the son of his foster mother abducts a girl to be his wife; if the relatives of the girl pursue the abductor, the princely ward comes to his aid with words and weapons and does not give up the abducted girl; subsequently he keeps her at his house until the matter is definitely settled, for none of the relatives of the abducted girl would dare to attack his home.

If, on the other hand, the marriage of the son or daughter [584] of the foster father is arranged peacefully by the voluntary consent of both sides, then here, too, the princely ward is considered the bridegroom's best man and presents the bride with money, a horse, etc.

The foster parents in turn do not fail to perform their duties with regard to their ward, whom they call their sun, their /22/ sacredness, and by whose name they swear. Every year at [431] Christmastide they give him presents, such as cheese, capons, and bread; at Easter, a lamb or a kid and "chumukhkvati." These presents are the obligatory outward signs of sincere liking and friendship on the part of lesser ones ("lower brotherhood") towards those of higher rank; with their cessation the mutual friendship is also broken off.

The sons of the foster mother are usually the bosom friends [579] and accomplices of the ward in his nocturnal thieving adventures. That is why a prince or nobleman always takes the sons of his foster mother with him on his thieving expeditions; he knows that

/23 cont./

608 565 peasants also rear the children of clergymen, of merchants, and even of other peasants. There are also cases of even nobles taking in and rearing the sons of strong and influential princes on the same basis.

IV.

Marriage

583 Some fifteen years ago the groom usually abducted a girl for a wife; that is to say, without the consent of the girl's parents or her own consent, he carried out an attack upon her with the help of his comrades and led her away by force. Such cases are rare nowadays. On the contrary, abductions are now for the greater part carried out with the consent of the bride herself, though not infrequently against the will of her parents. In the latter case, the one chosen as a bride comes at night to a previously arranged place a few versts from the parental home. The groom comes to the same place with his comrades, on horses. She mounts a horse brought especially for her, and the whole cavalcade gallops back to the home of the groom or to that of some influential person. No pursuers are able to take the bride away from the abductors, for they are prepared, if necessary, to fight to the last drop of blood for her. Soon after the abduction the girl herself announces publicly that the abduction took place according to her personal wishes and that she can be happy only with her abductor. Mutual negotiations are now [584] initiated and everything ends in peace; the son-in-law brings presents to the mother and the father of the bride, and the case is closed.

584 583 [558] It must be noted that the Abkhaz never abducts a girl lower in standing than himself. This would be considered a loss of honor for the abductor. On the contrary, everybody tries to abduct a girl of higher or at least equal birth. To propose to a [154] girl and to receive a refusal either from her or from her parents

/23 cont./

584 is considered a mortal insult; /24/ in this case abduction is con-
583 sidered the only way of satisfying one's injured self-esteem. But
54 usually marriage negotiations are conducted in Abkhazia by female matchmakers or by intermediaries. If they bring the
465 matter to a happy conclusion, their labors are rewarded with the heads and hides of the oxen that are butchered for the wedding. As soon as a mutual understanding has been reached, the bride and groom, after an exchange of presents, set a day for a meeting.

At the designated time, the groom and his friends set out, with presents, for the house of the parents of the bride. A
583 princely groom sometimes brings as many as 20 or 30 horses, of which many are saddled. Now a feast is held at the groom's
574 expense. During the banquet the friends of the groom, on the one hand, and those invited by the bride's parents, on the other, try in all possible ways to outdo each other in witticisms, puns, eloquence, in the amount of wine consumed, in singing, etc. The next day the comrades of the groom receive various presents and the groom himself receives a horse, or money and arms. Then the comrades return home, while the son-in-law remains in the house of the bride's parents with his delegate (dade).

But the future son-in-law still feels extremely ill at ease. According to the custom of the country, he may not yet show himself to the parents of the bride or their relatives. He is wrapped in a burka, and his head and face are wrapped in a bashlyk, under which only his eyes are barely visible. On the first night, during the feast, he hides himself somewhere outside and spends the night in a neighboring house. On the next day he is forcibly taken to the bride's house. But even now he does not dare to sit down and remains standing by the door, leaving it to his delegate to speak for him. In general it is not
606 proper for the young son-in-law to eat with his parents-in-law, or sometimes even to sit down with them at the table. In some places, husband and wife never appear together before the wife's parents. This is considered shameful.

The bride takes up residence in a small house (amhara),

/24 cont./

584 from which she does not emerge until a feast is held in the big house. Then she is led into the house, and one of the elderly friends of the family, or the father himself, puts a piece of liver on a spit and begins to pray and to express wishes that the couple before him may be happy, prolific, etc.

When the groom returns from the house of his bride's parents to that of his father, he again is not allowed to show himself to his parents and older relatives. This, too, would be considered /25/ indecent. He does not appear until after the feast has been given by his father. Now the same blessings and wishes that were given when the bride was led out of her amhara are repeated, and the groom gives presents to his mother, father, uncle, foster father, and in general to all older relatives. This feast bears the name aphkhasharkhe (portion of shame, remover of shame).

585 After the preparation of the dowry, the bride's parents
●[583] invite their future son-in-law in order to entrust their daughter to him; at the appointed time the groom comes to get her with his friends and her girl-friends. On the way home with the bride,
[533] the marriage song bedniera (happiness) is sung, there is trick-
[526] riding on horses, pistol-shooting, etc. When they are approaching the house of the groom, they send someone ahead to announce the arrival of the bride to the groom's father and mother. Such a messenger stops somewhere near the gates of the house and
[202] without a word fires a pistol in the air. In the house he is offered some honey or sugar.

Meanwhile the wedding procession reaches the house. Here the friends and girl-friends amuse themselves for a while with a huge round loaf of wheaten bread, throwing it three times over the bride and over the house and breaking it into pieces, which are picked up by those present. After this the bride is led into the house, at the entrance of which two men hold swords crossed overhead. At the threshold she is offered honey or sugar, with the words, "May God give you a tongue as sweet." After the bride enters the house she is handed a cup filled with grains of gomi, on top of which an egg has been placed. Then she is led three times around the hearth while she scatters the grains of gomi. The bride is then seated, and they hand her a little boy

[760 cont.]

C 565 C [566] and noblemen and who had thus [761] become noble themselves; and serfs (tlo'kŏtl). The last were either peasants and could not be sold individually, or they were servants and were sometimes freed (begaulia). The peasants had to attend to the needs and obligations of the nobles, and these to those of the princes, but in return received gifts from them. In the case of disputes and on important occasions, princes, noblemen, and respected peasants took council together. This feudal system was most highly developed in Kabarda, and the Kabardin were the teachers of the neighboring peoples as far as mode of living, horsemanship, dress, and weapons were concerned. A pronounced aristocratic pride prevailed among the Cherkess, and their noblemen considered themselves as high as the princes of the Abkhaz and others. Therefore, at marriage the greatest weight was placed on equality of birth; sons of the princes by serf girls could become princes only through marriage with princesses, and then only princes of third degree.

C [620] C [197] A [565]

C 439 C [567] C [565] The Cherkess sold many of the serfs and slaves to Turkey, where the Cherkess women were sought for their beauty; they were never daughters of the princes or noblemen, however, who were only to be won by their peers through marriage and bride price, but rather, except for personal slaves, they dealt in Abkhaz women and captives from the Cossacks and other enemy peoples. Slaves could achieve freedom through marriage to a Cherkess woman or through adoption; this was accomplished by having the slave, as mentioned above, suckle at the breast of the woman in question in the presence of the senior member of the kin group (cf. p. 76).

C 560 C 597

A 583 Marriage. Up to fifty years ago among the Abkhaz the young men, accompanied by friends, used to steal a girl of equal rank whom they desired as a wife. Today the abduction takes place by an understanding with the girl or her parents, but usually the suitor works through a mediator (dade) or female matchmaker and pays a purchase price, besides the reciprocal gifts. Refusal of the offer results in abduction or alienation of the kin group.

A [584]

A 585 After the betrothal banquet the groom remains for three days in the bride's house or in the vicinity, but he may not

/21 cont./

565 608 This, however, does not exhaust the role of the ward with regard to his foster parent. He is the main character in the joys and sorrows of his foster parent; in all the occasions of his life that have any importance. Thus, when his foster mother, or her [765] husband, or one of their children dies, he bewails them bitterly, dresses in mourning, lets his hair grow, buys the coffin at his own [764] expense, and takes care of the arrangements and the ceremonial for the mourning and the funeral of the deceased. When the funeral banquet is given, he provides a sheep or a horse and again arranges everything. The ward also is the main character [583] when the son of his foster mother abducts a girl to be his wife; if the relatives of the girl pursue the abductor, the princely ward comes to his aid with words and weapons and does not give up the abducted girl; subsequently he keeps her at his house until the matter is definitely settled, for none of the relatives of the abducted girl would dare to attack his home.

If, on the other hand, the marriage of the son or daughter [584] of the foster father is arranged peacefully by the voluntary consent of both sides, then here, too, the princely ward is considered the bridegroom's best man and presents the bride with money, a horse, etc.

The foster parents in turn do not fail to perform their duties with regard to their ward, whom they call their sun, their /22/ sacredness, and by whose name they swear. Every year at [431] Christmastide they give him presents, such as cheese, capons, and bread; at Easter, a lamb or a kid and "chumukhkvati." These presents are the obligatory outward signs of sincere liking and friendship on the part of lesser ones ("lower brotherhood") towards those of higher rank; with their cessation the mutual friendship is also broken off.

The sons of the foster mother are usually the bosom friends [579] and accomplices of the ward in his nocturnal thieving adventures. That is why a prince or nobleman always takes the sons of his foster mother with him on his thieving expeditions; he knows that

/23 cont./

608 565 peasants also rear the children of clergymen, of merchants, and even of other peasants. There are also cases of even nobles taking in and rearing the sons of strong and influential princes on the same basis.

IV.

Marriage

583 Some fifteen years ago the groom usually abducted a girl for a wife; that is to say, without the consent of the girl's parents or her own consent, he carried out an attack upon her with the help of his comrades and led her away by force. Such cases are rare nowadays. On the contrary, abductions are now for the greater part carried out with the consent of the bride herself, though not infrequently against the will of her parents. In the latter case, the one chosen as a bride comes at night to a previously arranged place a few versts from the parental home. The groom comes to the same place with his comrades, on horses. She mounts a horse brought especially for her, and the whole cavalcade gallops back to the home of the groom or to that of some influential person. No pursuers are able to take the bride away from the abductors, for they are prepared, if necessary, to fight to the last drop of blood for her. Soon after the abduction the girl herself announces publicly that the abduction took place according to her personal wishes and that she can be happy only with her abductor. Mutual negotiations are now [584] initiated and everything ends in peace; the son-in-law brings presents to the mother and the father of the bride, and the case is closed.

584 583 [558] It must be noted that the Abkhaz never abducts a girl lower in standing than himself. This would be considered a loss of honor for the abductor. On the contrary, everybody tries to abduct a girl of higher or at least equal birth. To propose to a [154] girl and to receive a refusal either from her or from her parents

/23 cont./

584 [583] [54] is considered a mortal insult; /24/ in this case abduction is considered the only way of satisfying one's injured self-esteem. But usually marriage negotiations are conducted in Abkhazia by female matchmakers or by intermediaries. If they bring the matter to a happy conclusion, their labors are rewarded with the [465] heads and hides of the oxen that are butchered for the wedding. As soon as a mutual understanding has been reached, the bride and groom, after an exchange of presents, set a day for a meeting.

At the designated time, the groom and his friends set out, with presents, for the house of the parents of the bride. A [583] princely groom sometimes brings as many as 20 or 30 horses, of which many are saddled. Now a feast is held at the groom's [574] expense. During the banquet the friends of the groom, on the one hand, and those invited by the bride's parents, on the other, try in all possible ways to outdo each other in witticisms, puns, eloquence, in the amount of wine consumed, in singing, etc. The next day the comrades of the groom receive various presents and the groom himself receives a horse, or money and arms. Then the comrades return home, while the son-in-law remains in the house of the bride's parents with his delegate (dade).

But the future son-in-law still feels extremely ill at ease. According to the custom of the country, he may not yet show himself to the parents of the bride or their relatives. He is wrapped in a burka, and his head and face are wrapped in a bashlyk, under which only his eyes are barely visible. On the first night, during the feast, he hides himself somewhere outside and spends the night in a neighboring house. On the next day he is forcibly taken to the bride's house. But even now he does not dare to sit down and remains standing by the door, leaving it to his delegate to speak for him. In general it is not [606] proper for the young son-in-law to eat with his parents-in-law, or sometimes even to sit down with them at the table. In some places, husband and wife never appear together before the wife's parents. This is considered shameful.

The bride takes up residence in a small house (amhara),

/24 cont./

584 from which she does not emerge until a feast is held in the big house. Then she is led into the house, and one of the elderly friends of the family, or the father himself, puts a piece of liver on a spit and begins to pray and to express wishes that the couple before him may be happy, prolific, etc.

When the groom returns from the house of his bride's parents to that of his father, he again is not allowed to show himself to his parents and older relatives. This, too, would be considered /25/ indecent. He does not appear until after the feast has been given by his father. Now the same blessings and wishes that were given when the bride was led out of her amhara are repeated, and the groom gives presents to his mother, father, uncle, foster father, and in general to all older relatives. This feast bears the name aphkhasharkhe (portion of shame, remover of shame).

585 [583] After the preparation of the dowry, the bride's parents invite their future son-in-law in order to entrust their daughter to him; at the appointed time the groom comes to get her with his friends and her girl-friends. On the way home with the bride, [533] the marriage song bedniera (happiness) is sung, there is trick-[526] riding on horses, pistol-shooting, etc. When they are approaching the house of the groom, they send someone ahead to announce the arrival of the bride to the groom's father and mother. Such a messenger stops somewhere near the gates of the house and [202] without a word fires a pistol in the air. In the house he is offered some honey or sugar.

Meanwhile the wedding procession reaches the house. Here the friends and girl-friends amuse themselves for a while with a huge round loaf of wheaten bread, throwing it three times over the bride and over the house and breaking it into pieces, which are picked up by those present. After this the bride is led into the house, at the entrance of which two men hold swords crossed overhead. At the threshold she is offered honey or sugar, with the words, "May God give you a tongue as sweet." After the bride enters the house she is handed a cup filled with grains of gomi, on top of which an egg has been placed. Then she is led three times around the hearth while she scatters the grains of gomi. The bride is then seated, and they hand her a little boy

C 565 [760 cont.]
and noblemen and who had thus [761] become noble themselves;
C [566] and serfs (tšo'kŏtl). The last were either peasants and could not be sold individually, or they were servants and were sometimes freed (begaulia). The peasants had to attend to the needs and obligations of the nobles, and these to those of the princes, but in return received gifts from them. In the case of disputes and
C [637] on important occasions, princes, noblemen, and respected peas-
C [197] ants took council together. This feudal system was most highly developed in Kabarda, and the Kabardin were the teachers of the neighboring peoples as far as mode of living, horsemanship,
A [565] dress, and weapons were concerned. A pronounced aristocratic pride prevailed among the Cherkess, and their noblemen considered themselves as high as the princes of the Abkhaz and others. Therefore, at marriage the greatest weight was placed on equality of birth; sons of the princes by serf girls could become princes only through marriage with princesses, and then only princes of third degree.

C 439 The Cherkess sold many of the serfs and slaves to Turkey,
[567] where the Cherkess women were sought for their beauty; they
[565] were never daughters of the princes or noblemen, however, who were only to be won by their peers through marriage and bride price, but rather, except for personal slaves, they dealt in
C 560 Abkhaz women and captives from the Cossacks and other enemy
597 peoples. Slaves could achieve freedom through marriage to a Cherkess woman or through adoption; this was accomplished by having the slave, as mentioned above, suckle at the breast of the woman in question in the presence of the senior member of the kin group (cf. p. 76).

A 583 Marriage. Up to fifty years ago among the Abkhaz the young men, accompanied by friends, used to steal a girl of equal rank whom they desired as a wife. Today the abduction
A [584] takes place by an understanding with the girl or her parents, but usually the suitor works through a mediator (dade) or female matchmaker and pays a purchase price, besides the reciprocal gifts. Refusal of the offer results in abduction or alienation of the kin group.

A 585 After the betrothal banquet the groom remains for three days in the bride's house or in the vicinity, but he may not

A 585 [761 cont.] eat with her people or show his face, which he conceals with the hood of his coat. The bride now stays for a time in a special hut (amhara), after which a feast is arranged and she is blessed by the father of the house; the same is done for the groom when he returns to his father's house (apʻkhaǯarkhe = removal of shame). The customs at the wedding, which takes place after the trousseau is completed, are almost the same as among the Osset (see p. 76). The young bride continues to live in the aforementioned small hut and may not speak with anyone. The young married couple may not visit the parents of the groom at the same time for several years afterward, and the two of them may never eat with them at the same time. The man may never utter his wife's name, nor she that of her husband or those of his relatives, in front of others.

A [606] [593] [602] [551]

C 583 582 [762] Among the Cherkess, too, girls are seldom stolen now; the bride is acquired for money and animals. The men marry from fifteen to twenty-five, the girls from twelve to sixteen years of age. During courtship (nakekh) the priest (mollah) completes the marriage contract after closure of the sale, as among the Mohammedan Abkhaz, whereby he joins the hands of the representatives of the bride's people. About two months later the purchase price is turned over, and soon thereafter the two- to three-week wedding festivities take place, with which are associated several peculiar customs preserved best in Kabarda.

A 584

C 585

The custom is so closely connected to the former abduction and defense by the kin group that, after the appearance of the bride, her mounted escorts defend themselves with their knouts against the youths, who stand in front of the house and attempt to unhorse them with poles until they succeed in jumping over the fence and gaining entrance to the house.

The groom is taken in for the wedding days as a "foster-son" (kan) by another kin group, from which he is assigned an escort (ǯatso-kot) of his own age, who attends him, hides him, since he is not allowed to meet older men until the "reconciliation" (see below), watches near him during the night, and rides about with him in the daytime in the hill pastures; here he gives him animals (ʻaga = for roasting), which he gives his people and

/16 cont./

342 Another kind of phatskha, in the form of an irregular rectangular, is constructed as follows. Two chestnut poles are driven into the ground at the front door in such a way that the upper ends touch each other. The Abkhaz call them amakratl-khkva (scissors). On the side opposite the "scissors" another pole is driven in; a beam is laid on top of the "scissors" and this pole, and the roof rests on it. The roof of such a phatskha can be flat or sloping. Such a phatskha can be built in any size. A passage is made in front of it, and in the back there is a special com-
[233] partment for storing all kinds of utensils and for keeping the cattle in winter. The walls of the phatskha are not covered; only in winter are they now and then covered with ferns. Therefore the walls are easily penetrated by light, and at the same time by cold and rain.

354 Inside the house, in the middle of the phatskha, is the
[252] hearth (akhushtaara), made of clay or hewn stone. Above the
[415] hearth cast-iron kettles are suspended from the ceiling on hoops; in these the food is cooked. The Abkhaz try to maintain a permanent fire in the hearth. The smoke escapes through the roof, but on windy days it remains circling inside the room; therefore the phatskha, and especially the upper part of it, is
352 covered with soot. On one side of the phatskha there is a couch; near the hearth stands a long and fairly wide bench, which sometimes also serves as a couch. The bedding is arranged on the couch; nearby stands a trunk, where all the necessary articles are kept. On the wall hang a saddle, a whip, and some
415 of the /17/ weapons. In a corner, close to the wall, are the utensils for preparing ghomi; in this same corner are baskets for provisions, wooden or horn spoons and cups hang on the wall, while milk-pails and troughs, etc. stand on the floor. Basins and pitchers are rarely found; instead of a pitcher, a gourd
412 is used. A few implements must be added to all this: a flat stone used as a mortar, and a whetstone. And that is the whole domestic inventory of the Abkhaz of average means.

342 The large quadrangular phatskha serves as the main family
● 585 dwelling, while the conical one (khkvatsu) serves as a lodging for

/17 cont./

342 newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one
[585] small house.

262 The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten,
[263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all re-
[888] ligious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all
[593] family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are
428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided
[592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

/22 cont./

565 they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for him if necessary.
603
[579] When a ward dies, the grief and sorrow of the foster parents
[964] are unbounded; for his funeral they furnish a shroud and money;
[965] they also bring one or two bulls, sheep, etc. for the funeral repast for the deceased. When their ward marries, they give
● [585] him all kinds of assistance through their personal labor. They also present him with fattened animals and bring presents to his bride as well.

608 Among the Abkhaz another type of wardship also exists,
565 namely, that of an adult man being invited to assume the role
796 of ward. The Abkhaz peasant invites such a man with the words, "I wish to take you into my house and honor you according to my means." On the appointed day, the person invited goes to the house of his future foster father and takes along a few additional people. During the supper the host and his relatives kneel down in front of their ward-to-be and give him a glass of wine; they then stand and one of them addresses to him the following speech: "From this day on we regard you as having been nursed in our family; we are of the same spirit as you and will begrudge you nothing; we hope that you, too, will begrudge us nothing; you will be held in higher esteem than the other wards." After this they present him with a few rubles and give something to his companions (khadzh /see foreign text/). While handing over the presents, they say, "Vadcha enup" (a present for you). This ceremony ends in the following way: on a carpet, spread on the floor, a chest is placed, on which the wife of the host of the house, i.e., the future foster mother, seats herself; the other women surround her. Then the ward-to-be enters through the open door, stands in front of the hostess seated on the chest, greets her, /23/ and thrice touches with his lips the nipple of her breast, or, as the Abkhaz say, "bites her nipples three times"; after each time he repeats, "from this day on you are my own mother." And indeed, from
608 this time on exactly the same mutual relations obtain between
565 them as in the first case where another's child is fully reared. It need hardly be said that, besides the princes and nobles, the

/24 cont./

584 from which she does not emerge until a feast is held in the big house. Then she is led into the house, and one of the elderly friends of the family, or the father himself, puts a piece of liver on a spit and begins to pray and to express wishes that the couple before him may be happy, prolific, etc.

When the groom returns from the house of his bride's parents to that of his father, he again is not allowed to show himself to his parents and older relatives. This, too, would be considered /25/ indecent. He does not appear until after the feast has been given by his father. Now the same blessings and wishes that were given when the bride was led out of her amhara are repeated, and the groom gives presents to his mother, father, uncle, foster father, and in general to all older relatives. This feast bears the name aphkhasharkhe (portion of shame, remover of shame).

• 585 [583] After the preparation of the dowry, the bride's parents invite their future son-in-law in order to entrust their daughter to him; at the appointed time the groom comes to get her with his friends and her girl-friends. On the way home with the bride, [533] the marriage song bedniera (happiness) is sung, there is trick-[526] riding on horses, pistol-shooting, etc. When they are approaching the house of the groom, they send someone ahead to announce the arrival of the bride to the groom's father and mother. Such a messenger stops somewhere near the gates of the house and [202] without a word fires a pistol in the air. In the house he is offered some honey or sugar.

Meanwhile the wedding procession reaches the house. Here the friends and girl-friends amuse themselves for a while with a huge round loaf of wheaten bread, throwing it three times over the bride and over the house and breaking it into pieces, which are picked up by those present. After this the bride is led into the house, at the entrance of which two men hold swords crossed overhead. At the threshold she is offered honey or sugar, with the words, "May God give you a tongue as sweet." After the bride enters the house she is handed a cup filled with grains of gomi, on top of which an egg has been placed. Then she is led three times around the hearth while she scatters the grains of gomi. The bride is then seated, and they hand her a little boy

/25 cont./

585 as a sort of prediction that she, too, will give birth to a boy. A little later the bride is brought to the separate small house (amhara), and then the real wedding-feast begins.

On the second and third days the relatives come, meet the bride, and bring her presents, each according to his means. When they want to get acquainted with the bride, a friend of hers, her delegate (dade), lifts from her face the veil with which she is covered; the visitors greet the bride, and she, without saying a word, stands erect and quietly, with her eyes lowered. The responses are not made by her, but by her friend. When sufficient time has elapsed after the wedding, /26/ she answers questions addressed to her, but, instead of saying "yes" or "no," she only shakes her head.

The young bride remains in the amhara for some months; [592] then she is invited into the main house, and from this time on the whole care of the household is put on her shoulders. She always tries to satisfy her parents-in-law and to act according to their wishes. For several months she does not speak to anyone; afterwards she begins to speak, first to the younger people in the house and in the village, and later on also to the older ones, and last of all to her parents-in-law. The young bride is referred to by all the villagers as "our daughter-in-law"; they bring her various kinds of sewing-work, which she does without reward.

602 For many years the young couple avoids being seen together by the husband's parents, and they cannot eat together [606] [269] in their presence as long as they live. In conversation with older people, whether relatives or strangers, the wife cannot refer to her husband as "my husband," nor the husband to his wife as "my wife." The daughter-in-law may not sit down on the bench on [606] which her father-in-law or mother-in-law have been seated. [551] The wife can never call her husband by name and in cases of necessity manages instead with the pronouns "you" and "he." In the same way, she does not call by name her brother-in-law, her husband's foster parents, members of the family, the village elders, etc. The husband, on the other hand, only

avoids

/41 cont./

755 782 unnoticed by the occupants of the house of the sick, takes some object belonging to the sick person, e.g., a dress, etc., and goes to the river. Standing on the bank, she says, "Mother of the Water, mistress, if the sick person was bound by you, unbind him"; she then touches the water three times with the object belonging to the sick person and scoops up a few drops of it with alder leaves, which she carefully carries home, where she fastens them to the ceiling above the hearth, convinced that the fever will then disappear like the water in the leaves; then she runs out of the house with the words, "May your sickness also run away like this."

[756] If the sick person feels relief after this, a praying-woman is invited in, a hen and a rooster are prepared with a stuffed loaf of unleavened bread, and three candles are molded, which are distributed in the following manner: the hen and one candle are allotted to the "Mother of the Water," the rooster and the second candle to her husband, and the third candle to their maid-servant, called Abzahav-Abzachav (benefactress). The sick person goes to the water with the praying-woman and kneels down. The praying-woman takes a candle, lights it and places it near the water, and addresses a prayer for the relief of the sick person to the "Mother of the Water" -- dzdzlan dzahvvazh khiphsha gvasha ("Mother of the Water," "mistress of the water," Khiphsha Gvasha); she lights another candle and makes the same request of the "lord husband" of the "Mother of the Water, finally she sets in place the third lighted candle and begs the maid-servant to serve as intercessor and mediator for the afflicted one with her "masters." Then she passes her hand over the sick person's back and gives him "azati" (liberty) from his ailment.

782 585 844 A similar ceremony is performed for the young bride on the occasion when she is for the first time "led out to the water" (i.e., taken to fetch water); it is also performed for a woman in labor so that she may have plentiful milk. In this case, if the ceremony cannot be performed in full, an egg for the "Mother of the Water" is thrown into the water during the prayer.

/44 cont./

7.

782
585
[796]

The Prayer Ceremony in Honor of Azhahara

The Abkhaz call the protector or genius of the house and hearth by the name Azhahara in whose honor is performed the ceremony for a young married couple in the stage of their marriage before they have appeared together before their elders and the young woman is for the first time led into her husband's main house, or when the bride is invited into her father's house. One of the oldest members of the family sticks pieces of the heart and liver of a sacrificial animal on a spit and begs Azhahara to protect the young couple at home and out of doors.

8.

Alishkantra

782
231
[796]

Alishkantra is the "mistress" of dogs. In the opinion of the Abkhaz, the owner of good dogs will also be fortunate in the multiplication of his cattle; good fortune in dogs is associated with good fortune in all domestic animals. Therefore before praying to other god-protectors of domestic and wild animals, the Abkhaz prays to Alishkantra to grant him luck with good dogs and the opportunity to raise and breed them.

9.

/45/ A Prayer in Honor of Zhabran

[796]
[796]
262

Zhabran is the protector of animals. Every Abkhaz owning cattle performs the prayer-ceremony in his honor on "Cheese Saturday." For this they prepare suluguni (a big cheese) called "sacred cheese"; bread dough is placed on the hearth, in which a man puts a core of suluguni, whereupon he prays, "Prefer me to all those pronouncing your name;

[760 cont.]
and noblemen and who had thus [761] become noble themselves; and serfs (tso'kŏtl). The last were either peasants and could not be sold individually, or they were servants and were sometimes freed (begaulia). The peasants had to attend to the needs and obligations of the nobles, and these to those of the princes, but in return received gifts from them. In the case of disputes and on important occasions, princes, noblemen, and respected peasants took council together. This feudal system was most highly developed in Kabarda, and the Kabardin were the teachers of the neighboring peoples as far as mode of living, horsemanship, dress, and weapons were concerned. A pronounced aristocratic pride prevailed among the Cherkess, and their noblemen considered themselves as high as the princes of the Abkhaz and others. Therefore, at marriage the greatest weight was placed on equality of birth; sons of the princes by serf girls could become princes only through marriage with princesses, and then only princes of third degree.

The Cherkess sold many of the serfs and slaves to Turkey, where the Cherkess women were sought for their beauty; they were never daughters of the princes or noblemen, however, who were only to be won by their peers through marriage and bride price, but rather, except for personal slaves, they dealt in Abkhaz women and captives from the Cossacks and other enemy peoples. Slaves could achieve freedom through marriage to a Cherkess woman or through adoption; this was accomplished by having the slave, as mentioned above, suckle at the breast of the woman in question in the presence of the senior member of the kin group (cf. p. 76).

Marriage. Up to fifty years ago among the Abkhaz the young men, accompanied by friends, used to steal a girl of equal rank whom they desired as a wife. Today the abduction takes place by an understanding with the girl or her parents, but usually the suitor works through a mediator (dade) or female matchmaker and pays a purchase price, besides the reciprocal gifts. Refusal of the offer results in abduction or alienation of the kin group.

After the betrothal banquet the groom remains for three days in the bride's house or in the vicinity, but he may not

A 585 [761 cont.] eat with her people or show his face, which he conceals with the hood of his coat. The bride now stays for a time in a special hut (amhaza), after which a feast is arranged and she is blessed by the father of the house; the same is done for the groom when he returns to his father's house (apʻkhašarkhe = removal of shame). The customs at the wedding, which takes place after the trousseau is completed, are almost the same as among the Osset (see p. 76). The young bride continues to live in the aforementioned small hut and may not speak with anyone. The young married couple may not visit the parents of the groom at the same time for several years afterward, and the two of them may never eat with them at the same time. The man may never utter his wife's name, nor she that of her husband or those of his relatives, in front of others.

A [606] [593] [607] [551]

C 583 582 [762] Among the Cherkess, too, girls are seldom stolen now; the bride is acquired for money and animals. The men marry from fifteen to twenty-five, the girls from twelve to sixteen years of age. During courtship (nakekh) the priest (mollah) completes the marriage contract after closure of the sale, as among the Mohammedan Abkhaz, whereby he joins the hands of the representatives of the bride's people. About two months later the purchase price is turned over, and soon thereafter the two- to three-week wedding festivities take place, with which are associated several peculiar customs preserved best in Kabarda.

A 584

C 585 The custom is so closely connected to the former abduction and defense by the kin group that, after the appearance of the bride, her mounted escorts defend themselves with their knouts against the youths, who stand in front of the house and attempt to unhorse them with poles until they succeed in jumping over the fence and gaining entrance to the house.

The groom is taken in for the wedding days as a "foster-son" (kan) by another kin group, from which he is assigned an escort (šatso-kot) of his own age, who attends him, hides him, since he is not allowed to meet older men until the "reconciliation" (see below), watches near him during the night, and rides about with him in the daytime in the hill pastures; here he gives him animals (šaga = for roasting), which he gives his people and

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz

562 woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than
462 the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes
[565] toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and
[535] old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men
[579] and dance with them. There have been instances of women being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

562 If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the
● 586 Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and
[692] defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

/17 cont./

342 [585] newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one small house.

262 The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten, [263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

• 592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

[888] The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all religious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all [593] family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are 428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided [592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

/25 cont./

585 as a sort of prediction that she, too, will give birth to a boy. A little later the bride is brought to the separate small house (amhara), and then the real wedding-feast begins.

On the second and third days the relatives come, meet the bride, and bring her presents, each according to his means. When they want to get acquainted with the bride, a friend of hers, her delegate (dade), lifts from her face the veil with which she is covered; the visitors greet the bride, and she, without saying a word, stands erect and quietly, with her eyes lowered. The responses are not made by her, but by her friend. When sufficient time has elapsed after the wedding, /26/ she answers questions addressed to her, but, instead of saying "yes" or "no," she only shakes her head.

The young bride remains in the amhara for some months; [597] then she is invited into the main house, and from this time on the whole care of the household is put on her shoulders. She always tries to satisfy her parents-in-law and to act according to their wishes. For several months she does not speak to anyone; afterwards she begins to speak, first to the younger people in the house and in the village, and later on also to the older ones, and last of all to her parents-in-law. The young bride is referred to by all the villagers as "our daughter-in-law"; they bring her various kinds of sewing-work, which she does without reward.

602 For many years the young couple avoids being seen together by the husband's parents, and they cannot eat together [606] [269] in their presence as long as they live. In conversation with older people, whether relatives or strangers, the wife cannot refer to her husband as "my husband," nor the husband to his wife as "my wife." The daughter-in-law may not sit down on the bench on [606] which her father-in-law or mother-in-law have been seated. [551] The wife can never call her husband by name and in cases of necessity manages instead with the pronouns "you" and "he." In the same way, she does not call by name her brother-in-law, her husband's foster parents, members of the family, the village elders, etc. The husband, on the other hand, only

A 267 [760] Food. The daily dishes of the Abkhaz are cornmeal mush (abysta), which is eaten with strips of cheese instead of a spoon, sour milk, and millet prepared with cheese (aëladž) or with milk and cheese (atsamukhkua). In the winter they often eat meat, A especially goat. As everywhere, red pepper, garlic, and bitter herbs serve as seasonings. The women cook cone-shaped breads (arvasa) in milk for festive days and in water during fasts.

B 267 Like the Abkhaz, the Cherkess like to eat raw cucumbers with butter, salt, and red pepper, cooked young pumpkins, carrots, wild asparagus, dandelions, and other vegetables; also much rice and thick, stiff mush (pasta) made of wheat grains cooked without salt; formerly it was more often made of unhulled millet (pasta) or hulled millet (hatiama). Flat cakes (medžaga) of ground millet were also baked. Mutton and beef is often eaten with a gravy of sour milk and grated garlic (tusluk) or of honey and butter (fau'tgo). Sour milk (škau), curds, and cheese fill out the daily fare. Festive dishes are: spelt noodles with diced, hardboiled eggs, curds, sour milk, some butter, onions, and garlic (khinkal); flat cakes of wheat flour, eggs, and milk, simmered in butter (širaldama); small cakes of the same dough filled with curds and onions or with honey (haliva), dried apples, A apricots cooked in wine and honey, and other fruits, etc.

C 272 Festive drinks are: whisky (arka, fada fitsa = black F.), 273 mead (fada pliš = red F.), millet beer (fada khuš = white F.), honey water (fau'uš), cooked cider with added honey, raisins, and blackberry juice, beer (šür), light and heavy wines from A wild and cultivated grapes.

A ● 594 Society and family. As among other mountain peoples (see p. 732 [untranslated]), so also among the Abkhaz the father (awn aihab) and the mother (awn aihab ap's) of the house manage A the affairs of the kin group [Sippe] and perform the cult cere- 597 monies. They have a peculiar custom: an adult can be adopted by another kin group as though he were a child if he has kissed the mother of the house on the breast three times.

C 565 Up to 1866 the same positions existed among the Cherkess as among the Osset: princes (pši), noblemen (work), who were followers of the former in battle, those freed by the princes

A C 627 [771 cont.]

Law. Blood vengeance is still practiced among the Cherkess (t'li'lvasa = blood price) and Abkhaz.

A 2 [608] Formerly when a prince had struck down a peasant, his relatives could not avenge themselves on him, but rather on his foster father (cf. p. 20). The wergild was measured in "souls" according to rank, and in spans according to the size of the body; the unit of value for this was one cow (cf. p. 747 [untranslated]). A "soul" of four spans was compensated for with 30 cows, a soul of five spans with 50 cows, of six spans with 70 cows; a peasant was reckoned at five souls, a nobleman at 15 souls, a prince at 25. The wergild consisted of cows, goats, sheep, and beehives; it was increased by one span if not paid on time. If the avenger was inclined to forgivesness, he confirmed it by kissing the breast of the guilty man's mother or wife (cf. above, p. 15).

C 685 Among the Cherkess theft was expiated in the same way as among the Khevsur. The thief had to return the stolen goods and thirty oxen as well to a nobleman, and to a prince he had to replace it ninefold.

A ● 592 428 When there is a division of an Abkhaz kin group, the father of the house and the mother receive half of the total property; if the father is already dead, the mother receives the dowry [Mitgift] that has been brought in and [772] an equal portion from each son. The oldest son has a right of priority (ai'ab-šakhu) in division or inheritance, and likewise--as among the Osset--the youngest (eidzb-šakhu); the farm, among other things, falls to the latter, the rest being equally divided among the other children, with the daughters receiving less. Among the Cherkess the eldest son had to care for his unmarried sisters; for this he received the bride-money (see p. 16) when he had them marry.

C 593

A 782 A peculiar oath of purgation is customary among the Abkhaz; the accused strikes the anvil three times with the hammer in the smithy and says that the god of the smiths may smash his head if he is guilty. Or he goes [Fig. 452 appears here] between two loaded rifles three times and challenges the god to shoot him in the head if he is lying.

/17 cont./

342 newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one
[585] small house.

262 The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten,
[263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all re-
[888] ligious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great
●[593] love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are
428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided
[592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes [565] toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 462

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, [535] funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men and dance with them. There have been instances of women [579] being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

562 586 [692]

If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

A 585 [761 cont.] eat with her people or show his face, which he conceals with the hood of his coat. The bride now stays for a time in a special hut (amhara), after which a feast is arranged and she is blessed by the father of the house; the same is done for the groom when he returns to his father's house (apʻkhaǯarkhe = removal of shame). The customs at the wedding, which takes place after the trousseau is completed, are almost the same as among the Osset (see p. 76). The young bride continues to live in the aforementioned small hut and may not speak with anyone. The young married couple may not visit the parents of the groom at the same time for several years afterward, and the two of them may never eat with them at the same time. The man may never utter his wife's name, nor she that of her husband or those of his relatives, in front of others.

A [606] [593] [601] [551]

C 583 582 [762] Among the Cherkess, too, girls are seldom stolen now; the bride is acquired for money and animals. The men marry from fifteen to twenty-five, the girls from twelve to sixteen years of age. During courtship (nakekh) the priest (mollah) completes the marriage contract after closure of the sale, as among the Mohammedan Abkhaz, whereby he joins the hands of the representatives of the bride's people. About two months later the purchase price is turned over, and soon thereafter the two- to three-week wedding festivities take place, with which are associated several peculiar customs preserved best in Kabarda.

A 584

C 585

The custom is so closely connected to the former abduction and defense by the kin group that, after the appearance of the bride, her mounted escorts defend themselves with their knouts against the youths, who stand in front of the house and attempt to unhorse them with poles until they succeed in jumping over the fence and gaining entrance to the house.

The groom is taken in for the wedding days as a "foster-son" (kan) by another kin group, from which he is assigned an escort (ǯatso-kot) of his own age, who attends him, hides him, since he is not allowed to meet older men until the "reconciliation" (see below), watches near him during the night, and rides about with him in the daytime in the hill pastures; here he gives him animals (ǯaga = for roasting), which he gives his people and

[763 cont.]

C 585 must empty it. Finally, on the same evening the old men dance at the young married couple's house, a fiddler (pšinato) strikes up a tune, and several young men and girls serve; a wandering C [533] minstrel (gegwako) presents congratulatory and comic songs to the accompaniment of the two-stringed violin (see p. 30).

C 595 Polygamy is permitted among the Mohammedan Abkhaz and Cherkess--among the latter it was permitted also in the sixteenth century when they were still Christians--but nearly all of them have only one wife. She lives in a part of the house reserved for her, where the man visits her secretly at night, but she is freer and more respected than is usual in the Orient (cf. p. 709 and 732 [untranslated]). Her presence prevents manslaughter and blood vengeance, and a fugitive finds protection with her (see p. 29).

C 586 The Cherkess can declare himself free of his wife in the presence of witnesses and marry again if he leaves the purchase price with her parents. If he has merely sent her back and has not taken her back within two years, her father or one of her people go to him in order to come to an agreement about the divorce; afterwards the woman, too, may marry again.

In earlier times when a Cherkess woman committed adultery, the husband had her hair shorn, cut off her sleeves, notched her ears, and sent her on horseback to her father, who C 585 sold her or put her to death. The same fate befell the bride if her husband found that she was not a virgin; he then recovered the purchase price.

Rearing of children. The Abkhaz and Cherkess noblemen and princes do not raise their children themselves. They [764] formerly entrusted them in their third or fourth year to another nobleman or peasant, who received nothing for his efforts but the best part of the booty brought home by his ward when grown up.

C 844 Soon after birth, before which the father leaves the house for several days, princely Cherkess children are put in C 608 the care of a nurse (anadzdzey) and a foster father (abadzdzey), together with cradle, linen, clothing, wash-caldron, a buffalo,

A 267 [760] Food. The daily dishes of the Abkhaz are cornmeal mush (abysta), which is eaten with strips of cheese instead of a spoon, sour milk, and millet prepared with cheese (aĕladž) or with milk and cheese (atsamukhkua). In the winter they often eat meat, A [263] especially goat. As everywhere, red pepper, garlic, and bitter herbs serve as seasonings. The women cook cone-shaped breads (arvasa) in milk for festive days and in water during fasts.

B 267 Like the Abkhaz, the Cherkess like to eat raw cucumbers with butter, salt, and red pepper, cooked young pumpkins, carrots, wild asparagus, dandelions, and other vegetables; also much rice and thick, stiff mush (pasta) made of wheat grains cooked without salt; formerly it was more often made of unhulled millet (pasta) or hulled millet (hatiama). Flat cakes (medžaga) of ground millet were also baked. Mutton and beef is often eaten with a gravy of sour milk and grated garlic (tusluk) or of honey and butter (fau'tgo). Sour milk (škau), curds, and cheese fill out the daily fare. Festive dishes are: spelt noodles with diced, hardboiled eggs, curds, sour milk, some butter, onions, and garlic (khinkal); flat cakes of wheat flour, eggs, and milk, simmered in butter (širaldama) small cakes of the same dough filled with curds and onions or with honey (haliva), dried apples, apricots cooked in wine and honey, and other fruits, etc.

B 272 Festive drinks are: whisky (arka, fada fitsa = black F.), 273 mead (fada pliš = red F.), millet beer (fada khuš = white F.), honey water (fau'uš), cooked cider with added honey, raisins, and blackberry juice, beer (šur), light and heavy wines from wild and cultivated grapes.

A 597 Society and family. As among other mountain peoples (see p. 732 [untranslated]), so also among the Abkhaz the father (awn aihab) and the mother (awn aihab ap's) of the house manage the affairs of the kin group [Sippe] and perform the cult ceremonies. They have a peculiar custom: an adult can be adopted by another kin group as though he were a child if he has kissed the mother of the house on the breast three times.

C 565 Up to 1866 the same positions existed among the Cherkess as among the Ossets: princes (pši), noblemen (work), who were followers of the former in battle, those freed by the princes

/25 cont./

585 as a sort of prediction that she, too, will give birth to a boy. A little later the bride is brought to the separate small house (amhara), and then the real wedding-feast begins.

On the second and third days the relatives come, meet the bride, and bring her presents, each according to his means. When they want to get acquainted with the bride, a friend of hers, her delegate (dade), lifts from her face the veil with which she is covered; the visitors greet the bride, and she, without saying a word, stands erect and quietly, with her eyes lowered. The responses are not made by her, but by her friend. When sufficient time has elapsed after the wedding, /26/ she answers questions addressed to her, but, instead of saying "yes" or "no," she only shakes her head.

The young bride remains in the amhara for some months; [597] then she is invited into the main house, and from this time on the whole care of the household is put on her shoulders. She always tries to satisfy her parents-in-law and to act according to their wishes. For several months she does not speak to anyone; afterwards she begins to speak, first to the younger people in the house and in the village, and later on also to the older ones, and last of all to her parents-in-law. The young bride is referred to by all the villagers as "our daughter-in-law"; they bring her various kinds of sewing-work, which she does without reward.

• 602 For many years the young couple avoids being seen together by the husband's parents, and they cannot eat together [606] [269] in their presence as long as they live. In conversation with older people, whether relatives or strangers, the wife cannot refer to her husband as "my husband," nor the husband to his wife as "my wife." The daughter-in-law may not sit down on the bench on [606] which her father-in-law or mother-in-law have been seated. [551] The wife can never call her husband by name and in cases of necessity manages instead with the pronouns "you" and "he." In the same way, she does not call by name her brother-in-law, her husband's foster parents, members of the family, the village elders, etc. The husband, on the other hand, only

avoids

/26 cont./

602 [606] avoids pronouncing the name of his wife. When the wife's father and mother first visit their son-in-law, he must offer them presents in the same way as when he himself with his wife first visits the wife's parents.

V.

Mourning and Burial of the Dead

758 574 In general the Abkhaz are very compassionate towards the sick and never leave alone a person who is seriously ill. When the villagers are informed that one of their number is seriously ill, all of them without fail will visit him, inquire about his illness, encourage him, and try to cheer him. The patient is visited not only by his relatives, but also by all the other villagers, irrespective of their title or means. They usually come to visit the patient in the evening and spend the whole night with him, singing, dancing, or telling stories, making jokes, etc., with the object of somehow /27/ cheering the invalid and relieving his sufferings in one way or another. The sick are treated with home remedies, old wise-women say prayers over them, etc.

763 As soon as a patient dies, the women instantly break out in deafening wails and soul-shaking screams, at the same time tearing out their hair, scratching their bodies, beating themselves on the face and head, and so on. Meanwhile the whole 764 neighborhood gathers, and the weeping and sobbing increase. Some women closely related to the deceased begin to beat themselves, striking their heads against something or other; the others try to soothe and quiet them. But all these admonitions frequently have no effect on the frenzied mourners, who, as a result of the blows they have inflicted upon their own heads and bodies and of beating their heads against something, fall down as if dead. When quiet finally prevails, the funeral ceremony is arranged. The next of kin sew themselves mourning apparel, [203] and messengers are sent out with notices and invitations to the relatives, foster parents, friends, and acquaintances of the deceased; his fellow villagers on the other hand are obliged

A 585 [761 cont.] eat with her people or show his face, which he conceals with the hood of his coat. The bride now stays for a time in a special hut (amhara), after which a feast is arranged and she is blessed by the father of the house; the same is done for the groom when he returns to his father's house (ap'khašarkhe = removal of shame). The customs at the wedding, which takes place after the trousseau is completed, are almost the same as among the Osset (see p. 76). The young bride continues to live in the aforementioned small hut and may not speak with anyone. The young married couple may not visit the parents of the groom at the same time for several years afterward, and the two of them may never eat with them at the same time. The man may never utter his wife's name, nor she that of her husband or those of his relatives, in front of others.

A 606 593 604 551

C 583 582 [762] Among the Cherkess, too, girls are seldom stolen now; the bride is acquired for money and animals. The men marry from fifteen to twenty-five, the girls from twelve to sixteen years of age. During courtship (nakekh) the priest (mollah) completes the marriage contract after closure of the sale, as among the Mohammedan Abkhaz, whereby he joins the hands of the representatives of the bride's people. About two months later the purchase price is turned over, and soon thereafter the two- to three-week wedding festivities take place, with which are associated several peculiar customs preserved best in Kabarda.

A 584

C 585

The custom is so closely connected to the former abduction and defense by the kin group that, after the appearance of the bride, her mounted escorts defend themselves with their knouts against the youths, who stand in front of the house and attempt to unhorse them with poles until they succeed in jumping over the fence and gaining entrance to the house.

The groom is taken in for the wedding days as a "foster-son" (kan) by another kin group, from which he is assigned an escort (šatso-kot) of his own age, who attends him, hides him, since he is not allowed to meet older men until the "reconciliation" (see below), watches near him during the night, and rides about with him in the daytime in the hill pastures; here he gives him animals (šaga = for roasting), which he gives his people and

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Àyt'ar!" etc. The dough is kneaded from the same leaven, only when calling to the cows they exclaim *wootsw*. Shrove Saturday is dedicated to *zhwabrən*.

3. *Anəkha-nəḧwa* (*Dopu-nəkha*)

Near Adzvibzha is a little village called Dopukət, where dwell the Dopua-s who are attendants (Geo. *me-khat-ur-i*) of the "icon"—*Dopu-nəkha*, revered by all the Adzvibzhaans and Dopukətans. This "icon" is known also as *shwəjən-nəkha*, i.e. Sujuna icon, under which is meant, no doubt, St. George of Sujuna in Megrelia. This "icon" is called *zhwarək'yə* by the wives of the Dpua-s, for the reason that the wives of Abkhasians have no right to call by name the eldest members of their husband's *gvari*, or his relations. D. I. Gulia thinks that the word *zhwarak'yə* is the same as the Georgian *zvaraki*, meaning sacrificial animal (the ancient Georgian *zuaraki* = *zowaraki*, Armenian *zowarak*).[1] In honour of this "icon" every Adzvibzhaan and Dopukətan family bakes, on the Shrove Sunday, a cake from millet flour (*sorghum*, in Geo. *ghomi*), which is offered as a gift to it. Prayers are said by the head of each family, and a handful of salt and a piece of wax candle are put aside for the "icon". The eldest of the Dopua goes round the houses and collects the salt and wax.

Mamsər Dopua told us: "At the present time our icon is in the village Sujuna."

4. *Àyt'ar-nəḧwa* (*khwazhwə-kərə*, in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərə*)

On the first Monday[2] of the Great Fast the ritual of supplication to Àyt'ar himself is observed. This supplication is otherwise called *khwazhwə-kərə* (in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərə*). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *ə-khwazhw*) is a special cake, sometimes coniform, and sometimes of round flattened shape. These cakes, which may be stuffed with cheese or not, but on this occasion are lenten, are invariably included in sacrificial offerings of the Abkhasians. They may be boiled, as on this occasion, or baked. *A-kərə* denotes "to hold". After it is called, in Abkhasian, the month of February, *khwazhwəkən-mzə* (*a-mza*, month, moon). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *ə-khwazhw*) denotes also rhododendron, the leaves of which are indispensable in the making of sacrificial maize-cakes.

[1] As a cult term this word is met with in the form ḏ ʿ ṭ in Sabaean (Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, ii, 24, 87, cf. p. 191, n. 179), see N. Marr, *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhasians and Alans*, etc. (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archeological Society, St. Pb., 1908, vol. xvi, p. 203. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The Megrelians call this Monday *t'ut'askhhe bednieri*, lucky, or happy Monday, lit. the moon-day. With the Abkhasians, too, *Ayt'ar's* day is Monday; they pray to the moon exclusively on Mondays.

/23 cont./

584 is considered a mortal insult; /24/ in this case abduction is con-
[583] sidered the only way of satisfying one's injured self-esteem. But
[54] usually marriage negotiations are conducted in Abkhazia by female matchmakers or by intermediaries. If they bring the matter to a happy conclusion, their labors are rewarded with the
[465] heads and hides of the oxen that are butchered for the wedding. As soon as a mutual understanding has been reached, the bride and groom, after an exchange of presents, set a day for a meeting.

At the designated time, the groom and his friends set out, with presents, for the house of the parents of the bride. A
[583] princely groom sometimes brings as many as 20 or 30 horses, of which many are saddled. Now a feast is held at the groom's
[574] expense. During the banquet the friends of the groom, on the one hand, and those invited by the bride's parents, on the other, try in all possible ways to outdo each other in witticisms, puns, eloquence, in the amount of wine consumed, in singing, etc. The next day the comrades of the groom receive various presents and the groom himself receives a horse, or money and arms. Then the comrades return home, while the son-in-law remains in the house of the bride's parents with his delegate (dade).

But the future son-in-law still feels extremely ill at ease. According to the custom of the country, he may not yet show himself to the parents of the bride or their relatives. He is wrapped in a burka, and his head and face are wrapped in a bashlyk, under which only his eyes are barely visible. On the first night, during the feast, he hides himself somewhere outside and spends the night in a neighboring house. On the next day he is forcibly taken to the bride's house. But even now he does not dare to sit down and remains standing by the door, leaving it to his delegate to speak for him. In general it is not
[606] proper for the young son-in-law to eat with his parents-in-law, or sometimes even to sit down with them at the table. In some places, husband and wife never appear together before the wife's parents. This is considered shameful.

The bride takes up residence in a small house (amhara),

/25 cont./

585 as a sort of prediction that she, too, will give birth to a boy. A little later the bride is brought to the separate small house (amhara), and then the real wedding-feast begins.

On the second and third days the relatives come, meet the bride, and bring her presents, each according to his means. When they want to get acquainted with the bride, a friend of hers, her delegate (dade), lifts from her face the veil with which she is covered; the visitors greet the bride, and she, without saying a word, stands erect and quietly, with her eyes lowered. The responses are not made by her, but by her friend. When sufficient time has elapsed after the wedding, /26/ she answers questions addressed to her, but, instead of saying "yes" or "no," she only shakes her head.

The young bride remains in the amhara for some months; [592] then she is invited into the main house, and from this time on the whole care of the household is put on her shoulders. She always tries to satisfy her parents-in-law and to act according to their wishes. For several months she does not speak to anyone; afterwards she begins to speak, first to the younger people in the house and in the village, and later on also to the older ones, and last of all to her parents-in-law. The young bride is referred to by all the villagers as "our daughter-in-law"; they bring her various kinds of sewing-work, which she does without reward.

602 For many years the young couple avoids being seen together by the husband's parents, and they cannot eat together [606] [264] in their presence as long as they live. In conversation with older people, whether relatives or strangers, the wife cannot refer to her husband as "my husband," nor the husband to his wife as "my wife." The daughter-in-law may not sit down on the bench on [606] which her father-in-law or mother-in-law have been seated. [551] The wife can never call her husband by name and in cases of necessity manages instead with the pronouns "you" and "he." In the same way, she does not call by name her brother-in-law, her husband's foster parents, members of the family, the village elders, etc. The husband, on the other hand, only

avoids

/26 cont./

602 avoids pronouncing the name of his wife. When the wife's father
[606] and mother first visit their son-in-law, he must offer them presents in the same way as when he himself with his wife first visits the wife's parents.

V.

Mourning and Burial of the Dead

758 In general the Abkhaz are very compassionate towards the
574 sick and never leave alone a person who is seriously ill. When the villagers are informed that one of their number is seriously ill, all of them without fail will visit him, inquire about his illness, encourage him, and try to cheer him. The patient is visited not only by his relatives, but also by all the other villagers, irrespective of their title or means. They usually come to visit the patient in the evening and spend the whole night with him, singing, dancing, or telling stories, making jokes, etc., with the object of somehow /27/ cheering the invalid and relieving his sufferings in one way or another. The sick are treated with home remedies, old wise-women say prayers over them, etc.

763 As soon as a patient dies, the women instantly break out in deafening wails and soul-shaking screams, at the same time tearing out their hair, scratching their bodies, beating themselves on the face and head, and so on. Meanwhile the whole
764 neighborhood gathers, and the weeping and sobbing increase. Some women closely related to the deceased begin to beat themselves, striking their heads against something or other; the others try to soothe and quiet them. But all these admonitions frequently have no effect on the frenzied mourners, who, as a result of the blows they have inflicted upon their own heads and bodies and of beating their heads against something, fall down as if dead. When quiet finally prevails, the funeral ceremony is arranged. The next of kin sew themselves mourning apparel,
[203] and messengers are sent out with notices and invitations to the relatives, foster parents, friends, and acquaintances of the deceased; his fellow villagers on the other hand are obliged

A 585 [761 cont.] eat with her people or show his face, which he conceals with the hood of his coat. The bride now stays for a time in a special hut (amhara), after which a feast is arranged and she is blessed by the father of the house; the same is done for the groom when he returns to his father's house (apʻkhaš̆arkhe = removal of shame). The customs at the wedding, which takes place after the trousseau is completed, are almost the same as among the Osset (see p. 76). The young bride continues to live in the aforementioned small hut and may not speak with anyone. The young married couple may not visit the parents of the groom at the same time for several years afterward, and the two of them may never eat with them at the same time. The man may never utter his wife's name, nor she that of her husband or those of his relatives, in front of others.

A [606] [593] [607] [551]

C 583 582 [762] Among the Cherkess, too, girls are seldom stolen now; the bride is acquired for money and animals. The men marry from fifteen to twenty-five, the girls from twelve to sixteen years of age. During courtship (nakekh) the priest (mollah) completes the marriage contract after closure of the sale, as among the Mohammedan Abkhaz, whereby he joins the hands of the representatives of the bride's people. About two months later the purchase price is turned over, and soon thereafter the two- to three-week wedding festivities take place, with which are associated several peculiar customs preserved best in Kabarda.

A 584

C 585 The custom is so closely connected to the former abduction and defense by the kin group that, after the appearance of the bride, her mounted escorts defend themselves with their knouts against the youths, who stand in front of the house and attempt to unhorse them with poles until they succeed in jumping over the fence and gaining entrance to the house.

The groom is taken in for the wedding days as a "foster-son" (kan) by another kin group, from which he is assigned an escort (šatso-kot) of his own age, who attends him, hides him, since he is not allowed to meet older men until the "reconciliation" (see below), watches near him during the night, and rides about with him in the daytime in the hill pastures; here he gives him animals (šaga = for roasting), which he gives his people and

/11 cont./

682 killed under the obligation of killing either the murderer or one of the latter's relatives. A blood-feud passes from generation to generation and is a person's sacred duty; unavenged blood is considered a shame and a disgrace for the living relatives of the person killed. The Abkhaz believe that if for some reason or other blood remains unavenged, it will avenge itself.

[628] In case the killer himself managed to escape, a relative of his was held responsible; he was killed, captured, or robbed and finally ruined. Even the killing of the meanest slave often led to clashes involving whole villages; if a mutual understanding and peace were not restored among them, the result of such a feud would be that one of the villages had to face ruin or move away to another place.

682 565 In blood-feuds the descent of the persons involved played an important role. If, for instance, a prince killed a peasant, the relatives of the latter had no right to avenge the blood of the killed upon the killer, for "the blood of a peasant is not equal to that of a prince." Therefore, instead of the prince himself, [608] it was his foster father who had to pay for the blood shed by the prince.

There were different settlements for the blood of a peasant, a nobleman, or a prince.

Although the personal qualities of a man commanded /12/ special attention in Abkhazia the blood of a peasant was nevertheless valued lower than the blood of a nobleman, and that of the latter lower than the blood of a prince. For instance, if the blood of a peasant was valued at five human souls, then the blood of a nobleman was worth three times more, and that of a prince five times more than the blood of a peasant. The price [435] of a life was determined in terms of spans /pyad'/. A soul (person) four spans tall was valued at 30 cows or 30 rubles in silver; one of five spans, 50 cows or 50 silver rubles; and one of six spans, 70 cows or 70 rubles in silver. Arms and clothing were added as supplementary payment. Blood was paid off with cows, goats, sheep, and beehives. The number of the latter was determined on the basis of the value of a cow.

/12 cont./

682 426 If the blood-price was not paid within a certain period, then at the end of the year, in place of a debt of four spans, five were owed, in place of five, six, and six became seven, so that an already considerable debt increased still more and weighed like a heavy burden on the shoulders of the debtor. But the Abkhaz had one excellent custom -- that of coming to the aid of an insolvent debtor. All the latter had to do was to announce that he "owed for blood," and everybody contributed his mite to pay off the debt.

796 682 608 The following ceremony was considered the best way to a complete reconciliation of the parties involved in a blood-feud. A relative of the killer gave a banquet and, through intermediaries, invited the claimant of blood himself or his son. It was sufficient to persuade the claimant of blood to touch his lips to the breast of the wife or mother of the debtor, and, as a result of this action alone, everlasting and indissoluble peace would be restored between them. If, on the other hand, the blood-avenger would not be appeased and would not come to the feast, then those acting for the other side endeavored to abduct the son or some other close relative of the claimant or in some other way get such a person into their house. If they succeeded, then peace was restored whether the avenger liked it or not, for to kill the foster father was considered a violation and desecration of the "breast" and 186 beneath the dignity of a brave man. Love of homeland is developed to the highest degree in the Abkhaz. Some peoples say, ubi bene, ibi patria, but the Abkhaz, on the other hand, prays: "There is no better place in the world than Abkhazia. God, save Abkhazia." In both grief and happiness alike, the Abkhaz repeats this prayer.

574 As is the case with all ancient peoples, hospitality is piously honored and maintained in Abkhazia. The Abkhaz is convinced that every guest is accompanied by seven "baraka" (blessing, /13/ bliss, abundance), one of which remains with the host, and God gives back to the guest this seventh baraka. Even the poorest Abkhaz does his utmost to treat his guest as well as possible; when an Abkhaz sees a traveler going along the village

/13 cont./

576 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a [608] [755] long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge mtsuge seizgat," i.e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging 181 the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children [565] of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, [411] dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the [293] constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

526 Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games [541] are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 538 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

/18 cont./

III.

Education -- The Educated -- The Educators

565 While the upper class in Abkhazia enjoyed privilege and
566 power, the situation of the lower classes was one of great oppression; /19/ the batoni (master, feudal lord) looked upon his subject, his slave, as a commodity; he could sell or pawn him
[567] according to circumstances. However, even after the abolition
[579] of slavery, the position of the peasantry did not improve, due to the fact that the nobility did not cease from robbery and pillage and plunder until the most recent times.

565 Under such a state of affairs, all the peasantry could do
608 was to resign itself to feudal conditions and try, wherever possible, to get protection. The best method lay in the custom of adoption, or the rearing of the sons of the aristocrats by the peasants. Thanks to this custom, the aristocrats themselves were strengthened, for in this way they gained in the peasants their most faithful supporters, while at the same time freeing their wives from the onerous duty of bringing up and feeding their own children. This is the reason that in all Abkhazia there is not a single peasant who has not reared one or several princes and nobles; as a consequence of this custom, hardly one per cent of the nobles have been nursed at their own mother's breast.

Before the beginning of childbirth in a family of the aristocracy (didebuli), on the one hand relatives and acquaintances and, on the other hand, the future foster-mothers of the expected child, accompanied by their husbands and female relatives in order to be able to bear the newborn foster-child back to their village with due ceremony, begin to gather around the pregnant
344 woman. During the childbirth, girls from the village also come to
565 visit the expectant mother in order to distract her and to relieve
[533] her sufferings during labor with gay songs and the telling of fables
[538] and fairy tales. The husband is absent during this time. According to the customs of the country, he is not allowed to be present when his wife gives birth and therefore leaves the home. Above

/19 cont./

844 565 the bed of the expectant mother a cord is suspended from the ceiling, which she can grasp during the severe pains and spasms of childbirth. It is indecent for her to let her moans and screams reach the ears of her parents-in-law; she must staunchly bear her sufferings so as not to lose their respect forever. At last the child is delivered. The birth of a boy brings more joy to the [842] mother than the birth of a girl, as it gives her more respect and honor in the eyes of society, but she is not particularly saddened by the birth of a daughter either, for it still serves as proof of her fertility. The newborn child is left in the care of the wet nurse [608] [853] (the wife of the foster father), and the female relatives congratulate the new mother on the happy /20/ outcome of the delivery. The mother, too, is happy, and most of all, of course, because with the passing of the baby into the care of others she herself will soon recover and, free from caring for it, can more easily preserve her beauty and freshness of face. In a few days her husband returns and in his turn congratulates her on the delivery of her child (1).

1. Cf. the excellent article, "Abkhazia," by K. Machavariani in the newspaper Iveriia, 1884, No. 275.

608 565 On the day set for the departure of the wet nurse with the newborn baby, the parents give a banquet and give her the materials for a dress, for underwear, and for all the appurtenances for the child's cradle, a copper kettle to bathe it in, and other small articles.

From this day on the foster mother receives the honorary title of anadzdzei (nurse, foster mother), and both she and her husband, the abadzdzei (foster father), are held in universal respect; upon its entry into the house of the foster father and mother, the baby is recognized as a ward (akhupha) of the family to which the foster father belongs.

The foster parents cherish the child in due fashion and maintain him in comfort and contentment. After two or three [431] years the child is taken to its parents, along with presents consisting of one or two bulls, a goat, capons, wine, bread, etc.

/20 cont./

565 608 In the house of the child's parents, another banquet is held, to which the neighbors are also invited. On this occasion all kinds of honors are shown to the foster mother and her husband. The foster parents are granted the right to be the first to wash their hands, and upon their return home the parents of the child must seat them on their horses, i.e., when they mount, the stirrups on the other side must be held. The foster parents return home with [431] the child, loaded with all kinds of presents, animals, clothes, money.

The foster child remains with the foster parents during the course of eight or nine years, and then it is taken to the real parents. It hardly need be said that the child, having spent its early years in someone else's home, where it grew up and learned to walk, talk, and to love its foster mother and those surroundings, now has difficulty in adjusting itself to the new situation -- at [154] first the father's house seems almost like a prison to him. For this reason the child is allowed to visit the foster parents frequently. If the foster child is an orphan, however, he remains in the home and under the care of his foster parents until he is married.

/21/ The foster child is obligated to defend the interests of the foster parents, i.e. of that family whose members reared him. He is required, for instance, to search for a lost article belonging to his foster parents, to find the thief and to call him to account, and it is a great disgrace to him if he is unable to do this. In the same way, if someone offends the foster parents and they are not strong enough to pay back the insult, their ward must stand up for them. Let us suppose, for instance, that some prince has beaten a peasant. In this case the ward of the injured peasant must de- [683] mand satisfaction, not from the princely offender himself, for "his blood is unequal to that of a peasant," but from his foster parent, a peasant, and he is the one who has to answer for the insult inflicted upon the foster parent of another prince. If a peasant foster-father gets into any kind of trouble, his princely ward endeavors by hook or by crook to rescue him from his difficulties. In such cases, if the ward himself is still immature and unable to help his foster parents, then his parents act in his place.

/21 cont./

565 608 This, however, does not exhaust the role of the ward with regard to his foster parent. He is the main character in the joys and sorrows of his foster parent; in all the occasions of his life that have any importance. Thus, when his foster mother, or her [765] husband, or one of their children dies, he bewails them bitterly, dresses in mourning, lets his hair grow, buys the coffin at his own [764] expense, and takes care of the arrangements and the ceremonial for the mourning and the funeral of the deceased. When the funeral banquet is given, he provides a sheep or a horse and again arranges everything. The ward also is the main character [583] when the son of his foster mother abducts a girl to be his wife; if the relatives of the girl pursue the abductor, the princely ward comes to his aid with words and weapons and does not give up the abducted girl; subsequently he keeps her at his house until the matter is definitely settled, for none of the relatives of the abducted girl would dare to attack his home.

If, on the other hand, the marriage of the son or daughter [584] of the foster father is arranged peacefully by the voluntary consent of both sides, then here, too, the princely ward is considered the bridegroom's best man and presents the bride with money, a horse, etc.

The foster parents in turn do not fail to perform their duties with regard to their ward, whom they call their sun, their /22/ sacredness, and by whose name they swear. Every year at [431] Christmastide they give him presents, such as cheese, capons, and bread; at Easter, a lamb or a kid and "chumukhkvati." These presents are the obligatory outward signs of sincere liking and friendship on the part of lesser ones ("lower brotherhood") towards those of higher rank; with their cessation the mutual friendship is also broken off.

The sons of the foster mother are usually the bosom friends [579] and accomplices of the ward in his nocturnal thieving adventures. That is why a prince or nobleman always takes the sons of his foster mother with him on his thieving expeditions; he knows that

/22 cont./

565 they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for him if necessary.
608
[579] When a ward dies, the grief and sorrow of the foster parents are unbounded; for his funeral they furnish a shroud and money;
[764] they also bring one or two bulls, sheep, etc. for the funeral
[765] repast for the deceased. When their ward marries, they give him all kinds of assistance through their personal labor. They
[585] also present him with fattened animals and bring presents to his bride as well.

608 Among the Abkhaz another type of wardship also exists,
565 namely, that of an adult man being invited to assume the role
796 of ward. The Abkhaz peasant invites such a man with the words, "I wish to take you into my house and honor you according to my means." On the appointed day, the person invited goes to the house of his future foster father and takes along a few additional people. During the supper the host and his relatives kneel down in front of their ward-to-be and give him a glass of wine; they then stand and one of them addresses to him the following speech: "From this day on we regard you as having been nursed in our family; we are of the same spirit as you and will begrudge you nothing; we hope that you, too, will begrudge us nothing; you will be held in higher esteem than the other wards." After this they present him with a few rubles and give something to his companions (khadzh /see foreign text/). While handing over the presents, they say, "Vadcha enup" (a present for you). This ceremony ends in the following way: on a carpet, spread on the floor, a chest is placed, on which the wife of the host of the house, i.e., the future foster mother, seats herself; the other women surround her. Then the ward-to-be enters through the open door, stands in front of the hostess seated on the chest, greets her, /23/ and thrice touches with his lips the nipple of her breast, or, as the Abkhaz say, "bites her nipples three times"; after each time he repeats, "from this day on you are my own mother." And indeed, from
608 this time on exactly the same mutual relations obtain between
565 them as in the first case where another's child is fully reared. It need hardly be said that, besides the princes and nobles, the

/23 cont./

608 565 peasants also rear the children of clergymen, of merchants, and even of other peasants. There are also cases of even nobles taking in and rearing the sons of strong and influential princes on the same basis.

IV.

Marriage

583 Some fifteen years ago the groom usually abducted a girl for a wife; that is to say, without the consent of the girl's parents or her own consent, he carried out an attack upon her with the help of his comrades and led her away by force. Such cases are rare nowadays. On the contrary, abductions are now for the greater part carried out with the consent of the bride herself, though not infrequently against the will of her parents. In the latter case, the one chosen as a bride comes at night to a previously arranged place a few versts from the parental home. The groom comes to the same place with his comrades, on horses. She mounts a horse brought especially for her, and the whole cavalcade gallops back to the home of the groom or to that of some influential person. No pursuers are able to take the bride away from the abductors, for they are prepared, if necessary, to fight to the last drop of blood for her. Soon after the abduction the girl herself announces publicly that the abduction took place according to her personal wishes and that she can be happy only with her abductor. Mutual negotiations are now [584] initiated and everything ends in peace; the son-in-law brings presents to the mother and the father of the bride, and the case is closed.

584 583 [558] It must be noted that the Abkhaz never abducts a girl lower in standing than himself. This would be considered a loss of honor for the abductor. On the contrary, everybody tries to abduct a girl of higher or at least equal birth. To propose to a [154] girl and to receive a refusal either from her or from her parents

/27 cont./

764 [203] to come to the mourning ceremony without being invited. The deceased is put in a coffin. The women in mourning apparel, barefooted, their dresses torn, bloody scratches on their faces, and their hair loose, arrange themselves behind the coffin. From the other side the male and female mourners approach the coffin. The arrangement of the lamentations is as follows. Let us suppose that four or five women are coming to bewail the deceased. As soon as they enter the yard, they immediately start weeping and shouting "avav," and at the same time they put their fingers to their temples and continue to scratch their faces with them down to the chin until they have finished their "avav." The women sitting by the coffin answer their "avav" with the same exclamation. The mourners slowly approach the house. Their wails and sobs gradually become louder; finally they enter the house, where the real communal mourning takes place. The mourners enter the house, beating their foreheads and breasts; they kneel down before the coffin and thus bewail the deceased.

In another part of the house the belongings of the deceased are put on display, his clothes and his weapons. After the mourning of the deceased, weeping and sobbing are done over his belongings also.

Sympathy for the relatives of the deceased is expressed by [195] visitors in the following manner: "Had this but not happened to you; had you but heard of my death instead, etc."

764 /28/ The foster mother of the deceased or her children, •608 when they come to bewail the ward, break out in wails and cries even a verst from the house. In the yard they are met by people who have been stationed there for this purpose and who lead them by the hand into the house. This does not prevent the new arrivals from scratching their cheeks and necks on the way until they bleed, nor from beating their heads against the house-posts until they fall down before the coffin half-dead and with tears flowing. The foster father and his children likewise beat their heads and faces.

764 On the day of the funeral, lamentation for the deceased is [1965] general. Then, after the mourning, a funeral repast is arranged and all the guests are treated to bread, wine, and lenten fare, and by evening the deceased is buried.

C 627 [771 cont.]

Law. Blood vengeance is still practiced among the Cherkess (t'li'lvasa = blood price) and Abkhaz.

A 2 [608] Formerly when a prince had struck down a peasant, his relatives could not avenge themselves on him, but rather on his foster father (cf. p. 20). The wergild was measured in "souls" according to rank, and in spans according to the size of the body; the unit of value for this was one cow (cf. p. 747 [untranslated]). A "soul" of four spans was compensated for with 30 cows, a soul of five spans with 50 cows, of six spans with 70 cows; a peasant was reckoned at five souls, a nobleman at 15 souls, a prince at 25. The wergild consisted of cows, goats, sheep, and beehives; it was increased by one span if not paid on time. If the avenger was inclined to forgivesness, he confirmed it by kissing the breast of the guilty man's mother or wife (cf. above, p. 15).

C 685 Among the Cherkess theft was expiated in the same way as among the Khevsur. The thief had to return the stolen goods and thirty oxen as well to a nobleman, and to a prince he had to replace it ninefold.

A 592 428 When there is a division of an Abkhaz kin group, the father of the house and the mother receive half of the total property; if the father is already dead, the mother receives the dowry [Mitgift] that has been brought in and [772] an equal portion from each son. The oldest son has a right of priority (ai'ab-šakhu) in division or inheritance, and likewise--as among the Osset--the youngest (eidzb-šakhu); the farm, among other things, falls to the latter, the rest being equally divided among the other children, with the daughters receiving less. Among

C 593 the Cherkess the eldest son had to care for his unmarried sisters; for this he received the bride-money (see p. 16) when he had them marry.

A 782 A peculiar oath of purgation is customary among the Abkhaz; the accused strikes the anvil three times with the hammer in the smithy and says that the god of the smiths may smash his head if he is guilty. Or he goes [Fig. 452 appears here] between two loaded rifles three times and challenges the god to shoot him in the head if he is lying.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

6. *Akhyə Zoshən*

The Abkhasians ascribe diseases generally to supernatural influences or gods, but some diseases have their own special gods. The god of small-pox, for example, is *Akhyə Zoshən* (the golden Zoskhan), and also his consort, the goddess *Khania Shkwdkwa* (Khania the white). How important are the gods of the Abkhasians may be judged from the following circumstance which took place during the spring of 1914 in one of the settlements of the village Jgerdi. Throughout the winter and spring of the year Abkhasia was in the grip of a severe epidemic of small-pox. In order to check the spread of the disease vaccinators were sent to the affected areas. The following account of what happened was described to me by P. Janashia, one of the vaccinators. A certain settlement, fearing that the gods might wreak vengeance upon them, refused to admit the vaccinators; they preferred to safeguard themselves against this terrible disease, *atswarp'shdzə* (small-pox), by the adoption of the gods. *Atswə* denotes skin, rind, and *ap'shdzə*, pretty, beautiful; the whole, in translation, denoting "that which decorates (beautifies) the skin".

By pooling their resources, the settlement raised enough money to buy a couple of snow-white goats and a sufficiency of provisions, and made an expedition into the forest. Here, amidst the quietude and peace of over-hanging leaves, a sumptuous feast was prepared for the divine guests. When everything was ready, and the victim had been placed, according to custom, on *ashwamkyadə*, the head of the settlement said the prayer and made the offering to the gods. Nearby stood two bedsteads, adorned with silk bedclothes, on which sat two young women, an *amauri* and a peasant woman; their naked breasts were covered with silk handkerchiefs. The whole assembly knelt down, while the head of the settlement implored the gods to accept their offering by kissing the breasts of the most beautiful women of the settlement, and thus become, in accordance with the ancestral custom, adopted sons of the settlement. Near the "foster-mothers of gods" stood two of the finest horses, one with a side saddle. The sumptuous feast followed the ceremony of adoption, and afterwards the people, holding the horses by the bridle, on which were to be riding the newly adopted gods, *Akhyə Zoshən* and *Khania Shkwdkwa*, escorted the precious guests to the accompaniment of song, far away from the settlement. Thus they "turned away", or warded off, the small-pox.

"You may not believe it," an Abkhaz from the settlement told me, "but this 'adoption' saved us from the small-pox; not one of us fell a victim to it. You, the learned, have caused our ruin by bringing down upon us the anger of the gods of our fathers," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

A 181 [751 cont.]
Abkhaz are similarly endowed, but are distinguished from the former by greater irritability, instability, garrulity, politeness, and, like the Mingrel, are notorious thieves. [Fig. 442 appears here.]

A 101 [621] [619] The Abkhaz now consist of 24 or 25 kin groups or communities; as tribes, the following have been mentioned earlier: the Ubykh between Khamise and Shakhe, the Abadzekh between Pshekups and Byelaya, the Dzhigeth between Shakhe and Mzymta; farther south up to the Bzyb, the Bzubb, up to the Kodor, the true Abkhaz, and in their hinterland the Tsebeldin; up to the Galisga, the Abshav and, bordering on Mingrelia, the Samurzakhan.

A 99 177 [302] Dress. The Abkhaz women wear Cherkess, or nowadays usually European, clothing (see Fig. 443), the men the Cherkess coat (see Fig. 441); they usually shave the head bare.

C 291 The Cherkess attire for men has spread widely among the Cossacks and [752] [Fig. 443 appears here] through all of Caucasia as far as the lowland Georgians in the south, and the women's attire has been adopted by the neighboring Abkhaz, Karachai, and Osset. The men's costume (see Fig. 442) consists of a short (yana) of white linen or red taffeta, baggy pants, a silk embroidered undergarment with a collar, a long robe (tsié) open at the chest, made of black or gray cloth, with cartridge pockets (khazyr) on the breast, narrow belt strap, leather leggings, sandals of leather or linden bark, cap (papakh) of white or black sheepskin (see Fig. 444), and in addition, for bad weather, a black coat (tsauka, burka) of goat and sheep wool, with a hood (g'etapt) that is draped around in such a manner that the right arm remains free. They cut their hair off short, leaving only a braided tuft (haidar). Out-of-doors they carry a dagger (kama, see Fig. 449) on the belt, and from a sword-belt they hang a saber, the blade of which is often Damascus, Khorassan, Hungarian, or Lezgin work and which is often inlayed with silver or gold on a black background, as are also the studs of the horse's harness and other parts of the armament. This further consists of: pistol (see Fig. 450), flintlock rifle with

A [199]

C 302

C 411

C [439] [495]

A 181 [751 cont.]
Abkhaz are similarly endowed, but are distinguished from the former by greater irritability, instability, garrulity, politeness, and, like the Mingrel, are notorious thieves. [Fig. 442 appears here.]

A 101 [621] [619] The Abkhaz now consist of 24 or 25 kin groups or communities; as tribes, the following have been mentioned earlier: the Ubykh between Khamise and Shakhe, the Abadzekh between Pshekups and Byelaya, the Dzhigeth between Shakhe and Mzymta; farther south up to the Bzyb, the Bzubb, up to the Kodor, the true Abkhaz, and in their hinterland the Tsebeldin; up to the Galisga, the Abshav and, bordering on Mingrelia, the Samurzakhan.

A 89 177 [302] Dress. The Abkhaz women wear Cherkess, or nowadays usually European, clothing (see Fig. 443), the men the Cherkess coat (see Fig. 441); they usually shave the head bare.

C 291 A [197] The Cherkess attire for men has spread widely among the Cossacks and [752] [Fig. 443 appears here] through all of Caucasia as far as the lowland Georgians in the south, and the women's attire has been adopted by the neighboring Abkhaz, Karachai, and Osset. The men's costume (see Fig. 442) consists of a short (yana) of white linen or red taffeta, baggy pants, a silk embroidered undergarment with a collar, a long robe (tsié) open at the chest, made of black or gray cloth, with cartridge pockets (khazyr) on the breast, narrow belt strap, leather leggings, sandals of leather or linden bark, cap (papakh) of white or black sheepskin (see Fig. 444), and in addition, for bad weather, a black coat (tsauka, burka) of goat and sheep wool, with a hood (g'etapt) that is draped around in such a manner C 302 that the right arm remains free. They cut their hair off short, C 411 leaving only a braided tuft (haidar). Out-of-doors they carry a dagger (kama, see Fig. 449) on the belt, and from a sword-belt they hang a saber, the blade of which is often Damascus, C [439] [495] Khorassan, Hungarian, or Lezgin work and which is often inlayed with silver or gold on a black background, as are also the studs of the horse's harness and other parts of the armament. This further consists of: pistol (see Fig. 450), flintlock rifle with

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwədù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *àămen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megrelianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread is baked in rhododendron (*à-k'wazhwe*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

* The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*h'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*hy*", "*wy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotizes the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*h'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*h'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

[1] In Abkhasian *àtshyashwə*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *ant'ari*) *tsh'ebeə*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsh'ya*), good (*à-bea*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *boeloba* (an abstract form of *boeoli*, cowhouse) or *iloroba*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ilori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhini-Ant'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

On this day also they " lay the table ", that is, prepare a dinner, for the souls of the deceased, unless the day happens to be one of abstinence, i.e. Wednesday or Friday. In the latter event the feast takes place on the following day.

(e) *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa*

On the same day of the Assumption is observed *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa* (cf. II (10)). The children are taken to a meadow where they are told to place their right legs against a tree. Each holding an *akwakwə̀r* in the right hand, they remain meekly in this position until the eldest in the family has addressed the prayer to " the spirit of the tree ", entreating " the great part of the deity of the tree " to safeguard them from giddiness, from falling off the tree, and from injuries. The children must eat their *akwakwə̀r* without removing their legs from the tree.

(f) *Anàna-gùnda* (the goddess of bees)

This is both a spring and a summer feast.

In the spring, when the bees begin to hive, the eldest (" pure ") woman of the family takes some hirse (Geo. *p'etvi*) and an egg, and enters the apiary, where she passes the offerings three times over the hives, and prays to the goddess of the bees, *Anàna-gùnda :* " Submitting these as a pledge that the established offering will be made at the proper time, I humbly entreat thee, *Anàna-gùnda*, to be the guardian of our bees ; safeguard them from all illnesses, multiply them, and grant them a good crop ! " Hirse and the egg are hung over the apiary.

In the summer, between the 15th July and the end of August, before the gathering of the first honeycombs, more during August, on a Thursday or Saturday, the promised offering to the goddess *Anàna-gùnda* is made. A large corncake (*a-mgal*), stuffed with cheese, is baked, and placed on one of the hives ; also an egg. The family kneel in front of the offering, and the " pure " woman again invokes the mercy of *Anàna-gùnda* upon the honey bees, and says an improvised prayer. The family repeat a long drawn out *dămen*.

After the ceremony, she divides the corncakes crosswise, into four parts, with two strokes of the knife ; and cuts these into smaller pieces. The family sit down there and then and dine. They do not forget the neighbours, sending a small piece each. The remains are placed in a basket and hung up in the apiary. Everybody passing by is obliged to enter the apiary and bless the honey bees and, scattering about a little hirse, eat a piece of corncake.

In ancient times when the Abkhasians irreproachably observed all the rites, the gods were more merciful to them. Thus, the goddess

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

778 is that the Ilori " icon " is omnipotent, and they, therefore, try hard not to incur its wrath. It is inflexibly just and punishes harshly those who deviate from the law; it is a goddess of equity, as it were; a
778 kind of Themis, and in the practical life of the southern Abkhasians
627 and of the Samurzaqanoans, there is, therefore, no " saint ", no
[690] " icon ", no deity equal to the Ilori " icon "; it determines finally and irrevocably all matters, whether civil or criminal, which the crown court has not been able to settle to the satisfaction of the popular idea of fair play. Even in the case of matters upon which judgment has been passed by crown courts, but where the decision has not satisfied the disputing parties, appeal is made to its tribunal. The trial is conducted as follows: A kind of arbitration court is set up which imposes upon
[782] the accused the obligation to take a propitiatory oath before the Ilori " icon ". If the matter is unimportant it is determined by a village tribunal which provides one or two co-swearers; but if the matter is serious (insult to one's honour, murder, etc.) the representatives of the parties participate in the trial with the judges. " Swearing in " follows, but the number of co-swearers increases; thus, for instance, 1–2 *t'avadi-s*, 2–3 *aznauri-s*, 5–6 peasants, 1–2 namesakes, 1–2 maternal relations, 1–2 relations of the female line of the *gvari*, etc., are frequently appointed as co-swearers. The oath is administered on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*. The accused swears before the icon that he is innocent, the co-swearers confirm his declaration, and there the matter ends. If the accused is unable to take the oath, he submits obediently to the punishment imposed upon him. From the day of the taking of the oath onwards the plaintiff breaks off all relationship with the defendant and his co-swearers. " The icon is between us (parts, separates us)," says the orthodox Abkhaz. It is impossible to evade this custom; it is an Abkhasian's profound conviction that infringement of this custom (the re-establishment of relationship), as also
[626] a false oath, will not pass unpunished; the " icon " punishes with
[753] sickness and even with death, if the accused does not come to his senses in time and confess himself in the wrong. At the death of all the members of the guilty family, the wrath of the " icon " recoils on the plaintiff. To avert the chastisement of the " icon ", as of Abkhasian gods in general, the guilty person must pray and make offerings to the " icon "; he must also compensate his opponent's material losses and obtain the latter's consent thereto; they both set out for Ilori with gifts, prescribed by sorceresses, and they pray there to the " icon " for forgiveness of their sins; they bring goats, bullocks, and money. This is called the reciprocal forgiveness-prayer (*eyba-nòkwara*). From this day normal relations are restored between the parties. If one of the parties does not agree to make peace, the other party can *akho-dchokhòra*, " buy back his head," i.e. redeem

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

224 539 according to another version). The gods revived the goat and destined it to fall a prey to our hunter. On the following morning, on his way back, he sighted a wild goat, killed it, and to his horror and amazement in its body he found his stick (knife).[1]

These *azhwèyp'shaà* have eternally youthful daughters, who often have love affairs with the hunters whom they reward with plenty of game. They select bachelor hunters as their object of love. One of them, however, once fell madly in love with a married Abkhaz; their friendship lasted for many years; often she herself visited him. One day, at dawn, the hunter's wife found the daughter of the gods, whose beauty was more than earthly, in the arms of her husband. The two were asleep on the balcony of the corncrib. A light breeze had disturbed the golden curls of the lovely goddess, and a few tresses lay in the dust. The wife acted in a manner born of pure love and sympathy. Quietly approaching the sleeping couple she lifted up the golden curls of the beautiful goddess and placed them so that they would not fall into the dust. When the goddess awakened she was so struck with the magnanimity of the beautiful wife of her beloved that she restored her husband to her, and forever forbade her sister-goddesses to have love affairs with married men.

224 Hunting is a sacred sport to the Abkhasians, and it is the custom never to talk of the hunter when he is hunting, but to say, if necessary, "he has gone somewhere." The hunters divide their prey into equal proportions; the head of the animal or bird, however, is given in addition to the one who killed it. Anybody whom the hunters encounter by chance also gets an equal share. Nor are the neighbours forgotten. Each goes up to the prey, and sprinkling it and also the successful hunter with some grain, says: "May gods grant thee a better one on another occasion!"

[526] Any kind of falsehood or evasion of the rules of hunting consecrated by custom is severely punished by order from above. The following story may be quoted as an illustration of this:—

[539] A well-known hunter once killed a wild goat, and another hunter, having heard a shot, ran up to him. The successful hunter said: "Behind that corner there is hiding another goat which you can easily follow up; it will be better to take home a kill each than to divide one between." The second hunter ran in the direction indicated but found no goat there. For this lie the gods punished not only the hunter himself but also his whole *gvari*; they have never since shot a single head of game.

[1] This story is written down from the words of A. Kardava, a Megrelian shepherd. In his version the wild boar figures instead of the goat, and *tqashi-mep'e*, king of the woods, instead of *Azhwèyp'shaà*.

A C 627 [771 cont.]

Law. Blood vengeance is still practiced among the Cherkess (t'li'lvasa = blood price) and Abkhaz.

A 2 [608] Formerly when a prince had struck down a peasant, his relatives could not avenge themselves on him, but rather on his foster father (cf. p. 20). The wergild was measured in "souls" according to rank, and in spans according to the size of the body; the unit of value for this was one cow (cf. p. 747 [untranslated]). A "soul" of four spans was compensated for with 30 cows, a soul of five spans with 50 cows, of six spans with 70 cows; a peasant was reckoned at five souls, a nobleman at 15 souls, a prince at 25. The wergild consisted of cows, goats, sheep, and beehives; it was increased by one span if not paid on time. If the avenger was inclined to forgivesness, he confirmed it by kissing the breast of the guilty man's mother or wife (cf. above, p. 15).

C 685 Among the Cherkess theft was expiated in the same way as among the Khevsur. The thief had to return the stolen goods and thirty oxen as well to a nobleman, and to a prince he had to replace it ninefold.

A 592 428 When there is a division of an Abkhaz kin group, the father of the house and the mother receive half of the total property; if the father is already dead, the mother receives the dowry [Mitgift] that has been brought in and [772] an equal portion from each son. The oldest son has a right of priority (ai'ab-šakhu) in division or inheritance, and likewise--as among the Osset--the youngest (eidzb-šakhu); the farm, among other things, falls to the latter, the rest being equally divided among the other children, with the daughters receiving less. Among C 593 the Cherkess the eldest son had to care for his unmarried sisters; for this he received the bride-money (see p. 16) when he had them marry.

A 782 A peculiar oath of purgation is customary among the Abkhaz; the accused strikes the anvil three times with the hammer in the smithy and says that the god of the smiths may smash his head if he is guilty. Or he goes [Fig. 452 appears here] between two loaded rifles three times and challenges the god to shoot him in the head if he is lying.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

778 is that the Ilori " icon " is omnipotent, and they, therefore, try hard not to incur its wrath. It is inflexibly just and punishes harshly those who deviate from the law ; it is a goddess of equity, as it were ; a 778 kind of Themis, and in the practical life of the southern Abkhasians 627 and of the Samurzaqanoans, there is, therefore, no " saint ", no [690] " icon ", no deity equal to the Ilori " icon " ; it determines finally and irrevocably all matters, whether civil or criminal, which the crown court has not been able to settle to the satisfaction of the popular idea of fair play. Even in the case of matters upon which judgment has been passed by crown courts, but where the decision has not satisfied the disputing parties, appeal is made to its tribunal. The trial is conducted as follows : A kind of arbitration court is set up which imposes upon [782] the accused the obligation to take a propitiatory oath before the Ilori " icon ". If the matter is unimportant it is determined by a village tribunal which provides one or two co-swearers ; but if the matter is serious (insult to one's honour, murder, etc.) the representatives of the parties participate in the trial with the judges. " Swearing in " follows, but the number of co-swearers increases ; thus, for instance, 1–2 *t'avadi-s*, 2–3 *aznauri-s*, 5–6 peasants, 1–2 namesakes, 1–2 maternal relations, 1–2 relations of the female line of the *gvari*, etc., are frequently appointed as co-swearers. The oath is administered on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*. The accused swears before the icon that he is innocent, the co-swearers confirm his declaration, and there the matter ends. If the accused is unable to take the oath, he submits obediently to the punishment imposed upon him. From the day of the taking of the oath onwards the plaintiff breaks off all relationship with the defendant and his co-swearers. " The icon is between us (parts, separates us)," says the orthodox Abkhaz. It is impossible to evade this custom ; it is an Abkhasian's profound conviction that infringement of this custom (the re-establishment of relationship), as also [626] a false oath, will not pass unpunished ; the " icon " punishes with [653] sickness and even with death, if the accused does not come to his senses in time and confess himself in the wrong. At the death of all the members of the guilty family, the wrath of the " icon " recoils on the plaintiff. To avert the chastisement of the " icon ", as of Abkhasian gods in general, the guilty person must pray and make offerings to the " icon " ; he must also compensate his opponent's material losses and obtain the latter's consent thereto ; they both set out for Ilori with gifts, prescribed by sorceresses, and they pray there to the " icon " for forgiveness of their sins ; they bring goats, bullocks, and money. This is called the reciprocal forgiveness-prayer (*cyba-nòẖwara*). From this day normal relations are restored between the parties. If one of the parties does not agree to make peace, the other party can *akhə-dchəkhòra*, " buy back his head," i.e. redeem

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

himself, by placing before the "icon" also the amount he was to pay to the opponent.

Muhammadans also take the propitiatory oath at Ilori, together with the Christians.[1]

There are many stories current about the power of the Ilori "icon" to work miracles. I learned one of them from the lips of Biram Tkhazou and Seyt Zhania.

"In ancient times the Ilori 'icon' determined all the disputes of human mortals in the following manner. High up in the centre of the church, hung the golden scales of Justice. Under these scales stood the suitors, praying zealously to the Ilori 'icon', who inclined the scale over the head of the righteous. Knowing this, Abkhasians would not venture to break the law or wrong one another; peace and happiness reigned upon the earth. But men are cunning; an impious Abkhaz decided to deceive the great Ilori 'icon'. He owed a neighbour of his a hundred *manat'i* (= rubles) which he would not pay. The creditor complained. They both went to Ilori. When they appeared before the 'icon', the debtor handed to his creditor his staff which contained the hundred *manat'i*. The scale inclined towards the creditor, thus acquitting him of the charge. He took back his staff and left the church. The Ilori 'icon' was 'offended' and because of this fraudulence on the part of one Abkhaz it punished the entire people: the 'icon' took the scales of Justice to heaven for ever."

In ancient times the Ilori "icon" provided oxen for itself on the eve of the wake festival. The Commission assured me that eye-witnesses of this miracle were still living in Abkhasia, but none knew their names. As this providing of the oxen is described by A. Lamberti in the manner in which the Abkhasians relate it to-day, I will quote the description from his work.[2]

"On November 20th[3] they celebrate St. George's Day. A superstition prevails among the people that this celebrated martyr, on this day, procures for himself an ox from the neighbourhood and brings it by night into the Ilori Church dedicated to him. This church is held in great esteem, not only by all the Megrels, but by the neighbouring peoples also. Therefore it is very rich in gold and silver[4]—the icons are all made of these metals and are adorned, too, with precious stones; and even the doors are mounted in thick sheets of silver. So revered is this church by all the people, that, although situated

[1] In Northern Abkhasia *Dalvrop'sh* is endowed with a similar power.

[2] A. Lamberti lived as a missionary for eighteen years in Megrelia (1635–1653), and, according to him (and also to other sources), the present-day southern Abkhasia (Abzhua) constituted then part of Megrelia, the northern boundary being the River Kodor.

[3] The 10th of our (old) style.—N. J.

[4] At the present time, too, it is the wealthiest and the most influential of all the churches of Abkhasia.—N. J.

/11 cont./

682 killed under the obligation of killing either the murderer or one of the latter's relatives. A blood-feud passes from generation to generation and is a person's sacred duty; unavenged blood is considered a shame and a disgrace for the living relatives of the person killed. The Abkhaz believe that if for some reason or other blood remains unavenged, it will avenge itself.

In case the killer himself managed to escape, a relative [628] of his was held responsible; he was killed, captured, or robbed and finally ruined. Even the killing of the meanest slave often led to clashes involving whole villages; if a mutual understanding and peace were not restored among them, the result of such a feud would be that one of the villages had to face ruin or move away to another place.

682 In blood-feuds the descent of the persons involved played 565 an important role. If, for instance, a prince killed a peasant, the relatives of the latter had no right to avenge the blood of the killed upon the killer, for "the blood of a peasant is not equal to that of a prince." Therefore, instead of the prince himself, [608] it was his foster father who had to pay for the blood shed by the prince.

There were different settlements for the blood of a peasant, a nobleman, or a prince.

Although the personal qualities of a man commanded /12/ special attention in Abkhazia the blood of a peasant was nevertheless valued lower than the blood of a nobleman, and that of the latter lower than the blood of a prince. For instance, if the blood of a peasant was valued at five human souls, then the blood of a nobleman was worth three times more, and that of a prince five times more than the blood of a peasant. The price [435] of a life was determined in terms of spans /pyad'/. A soul (person) four spans tall was valued at 30 cows or 30 rubles in silver; one of five spans, 50 cows or 50 silver rubles; and one of six spans, 70 cows or 70 rubles in silver. Arms and clothing were added as supplementary payment. Blood was paid off with cows, goats, sheep, and beehives. The number of the latter was determined on the basis of the value of a cow.

113, 631

Abchas RI 3

/For a list of territorial units of the Abchas A.S.S.R., see 7:Columbia U. RH 1 Caucasia, cat. 116, p. 642./

113, 642 Abkhaz RI 3

[For the constitutional provisions for the higher organs of state power and for the organs of state administration in the Abkhaz Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, see the Georgian Constitution of 1947, 5: American Russian Institute, RI 1 Georgia, category 116, pp. 10-12.]

113, 642

Abkhaz RI3

[For a brief discussion of the territorial and political status of the Abkhaz Autonomous Republic, see 21: Kolarz, RI Soviet Union, category 116, pp. 236-237. Bibliographic notes appear on pp. 253-254.]

[749] b) The Cherkess and Abkhaz

C 101 A 101 A 648 195 C 101 648 C R 167 A 142

The Cherkess are called Kerketai, Kerketioi, Kerketaioi, Syndyi, Zygoi, Zinchoi by the Latin and Greek authors of antiquity; the Abkhaz are called the Apsil by Pliny (29 to 70 A.D.) and Arrian (100 to 160 A.D), Ap'šili and Ap'sari in Georgian chronicles: Abkhazia was dependent on Georgia during the first few centuries after Christ and afterwards on Lazia; in 786 it became an independent kingdom and was united again with Georgia by Bagrat III (980 to 1014) by marriage. Later it again achieved independence under the house of Shervashidze until the Russians occupied it, first the southern part, Samurzakhan, in 1845, and the rest of Abkhazia in 1863. The Cherkess are supposed to have occupied the northern foreland to a point beyond the Kuma, but later [750] [Fig. 441 appears here] to have been pushed back over the Terek, the Kuban, and the Malka rivers by the Tatars and, since 1777, by the Russians. As a result of the Tatar pressure the Cherkess tribes along the coast of the Black Sea had moved from there in the fourteenth century and pushed in among the Nogai, Karachi, and Taulu, in the Kabarda district, from which they derive their present name. After the suppression of the revolt in Dagestan and, in the autumn of 1864, the decisive defeat of the Cherkess, who had been offering stubborn resistance for decades, most of them, over 400,000, emigrated together with many Abkhaz, including the entire Ubykh tribe, to Asia Minor, Syria, and the Balkan peninsula.

[751] The Abkhaz (see Fig. 441) are physically of medium height, powerful build, and wiry. The skull

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *antswa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1926, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

3: Janashia 1-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVihZha

à-khwazhw and entreats god *Alèshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer. In the opinion of the commission, *Alèshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkhasian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight." [1]

The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri, vàri, khəzà, jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri* (*wàri* from *aowyà*,* man) as man; *khəzà* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

(d) *Àmza-nəhwa*, Prayer to the Moon.

The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

* See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the production of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ɜ" (the ancient Arabic '*ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Arailè* (cf. *Alèshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Arnia*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVihZha

796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alòshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[262] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[754] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[776] In the opinion of the commission, *Alòshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[231] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
539 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language,
231 I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight."[1]

The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If
[821] someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri*, *vàri*, *khəzò*, *jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*wàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khəzò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

776 (*d*) *Àmza-nəhwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

* See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the
[104] production of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ʒ" (the ancient Arabic *'ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of
[171] Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Aralès* (cf. *Alòshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Araia*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

/10 cont./

867 579 immediately upon their return home revert to the practice acquired in childhood -- stealing. This is of course not the fault of the school or of secondary education, but of the traditional views on this "trade," contact with which kills every other way of looking at it, as the lone wheat-stalk is smothered among the weeds that surround it.

579 In his stealing, the Abkhaz is treacherous. The best of friends, to all appearances, do not hesitate to steal from each other, and in Abkhazia it is no rare thing for brother to steal from brother, father from son, or son from father. It is almost proverbial that when an Abkhaz has no one to steal from, he robs himself. There have been instances of an Abkhaz stealing a horse from a neighbor on a dark night, taking it miles and miles away and exchanging it for another, riding back home on this fresh horse the same night, and the next morning, the minute his neighbor raised the alarm, rushing over and being the first to offer his sympathy and joining the chorus of people calling down curses on the thief and dashing off with the others in frenzied pursuit.

685 579 692 The Abkhaz thief will not admit his crime, even /11/ when he could be convicted on the evidence of witnesses. When a robbery case is tried at village meetings, a decision of the judge in favor of the accused is not infrequently influenced by the audacity of the latter's pretexts, by his shameless subterfuges, and by his so-called "talking circles around them." In general at such [537] meetings, any exhibition of sly rhetoric, however shameless, on the part of a notorious thief finds not only attentive listeners but even admirers. "He saved himself by the bravery of his speech," they say in such cases.

And though such "eloquence" on the part of the thief often saves the guilty one from punishment, the victim, understandably, does not believe in his innocence and tries to get back at him at the proper moment for his losses, according to the formula of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

682 At present vengeance for spilled blood is on the wane, but at one time it was one of the most important features of Abkhaz life. The custom of blood-revenge puts the relatives of a person

/11 cont./

682 killed under the obligation of killing either the murderer or one of the latter's relatives. A blood-feud passes from generation to generation and is a person's sacred duty; unavenged blood is considered a shame and a disgrace for the living relatives of the person killed. The Abkhaz believe that if for some reason or other blood remains unavenged, it will avenge itself.

[628] In case the killer himself managed to escape, a relative of his was held responsible; he was killed, captured, or robbed and finally ruined. Even the killing of the meanest slave often led to clashes involving whole villages; if a mutual understanding and peace were not restored among them, the result of such a feud would be that one of the villages had to face ruin or move away to another place.

682 565 In blood-feuds the descent of the persons involved played an important role. If, for instance, a prince killed a peasant, the relatives of the latter had no right to avenge the blood of the killed upon the killer, for "the blood of a peasant is not equal to that of a prince." Therefore, instead of the prince himself, [608] it was his foster father who had to pay for the blood shed by the prince.

There were different settlements for the blood of a peasant, a nobleman, or a prince.

Although the personal qualities of a man commanded /12/ special attention in Abkhazia the blood of a peasant was nevertheless valued lower than the blood of a nobleman, and that of the latter lower than the blood of a prince. For instance, if the blood of a peasant was valued at five human souls, then the blood of a nobleman was worth three times more, and that of a prince five times more than the blood of a peasant. The price [435] of a life was determined in terms of spans /pyad'/. A soul (person) four spans tall was valued at 30 cows or 30 rubles in silver; one of five spans, 50 cows or 50 silver rubles; and one of six spans, 70 cows or 70 rubles in silver. Arms and clothing were added as supplementary payment. Blood was paid off with cows, goats, sheep, and beehives. The number of the latter was determined on the basis of the value of a cow.

/12 cont./

682 426 If the blood-price was not paid within a certain period, then at the end of the year, in place of a debt of four spans, five were owed, in place of five, six, and six became seven, so that an already considerable debt increased still more and weighed like a heavy burden on the shoulders of the debtor. But the Abkhaz had one excellent custom -- that of coming to the aid of an insolvent debtor. All the latter had to do was to announce that he "owed for blood," and everybody contributed his mite to pay off the debt.

796 682 608 The following ceremony was considered the best way to a complete reconciliation of the parties involved in a blood-feud. A relative of the killer gave a banquet and, through intermediaries, invited the claimant of blood himself or his son. It was sufficient to persuade the claimant of blood to touch his lips to the breast of the wife or mother of the debtor, and, as a result of this action alone, everlasting and indissoluble peace would be restored between them. If, on the other hand, the blood-avenger would not be appeased and would not come to the feast, then those acting for the other side endeavored to abduct the son or some other close relative of the claimant or in some other way get such a person into their house. If they succeeded, then peace was restored whether the avenger liked it or not, for to kill the foster father was considered a violation and desecration of the "breast" and 186 beneath the dignity of a brave man. Love of homeland is developed to the highest degree in the Abkhaz. Some peoples say, ubi bene, ibi patria, but the Abkhaz, on the other hand, prays: "There is no better place in the world than Abkhazia. God, save Abkhazia." In both grief and happiness alike, the Abkhaz repeats this prayer.

594 As is the case with all ancient peoples, hospitality is piously honored and maintained in Abkhazia. The Abkhaz is convinced that every guest is accompanied by seven "baraka" (blessing, /13/ bliss, abundance), one of which remains with the host, and God gives back to the guest this seventh baraka. Even the poorest Abkhaz does his utmost to treat his guest as well as possible; when an Abkhaz sees a traveler going along the village

/20 cont./

565 608 In the house of the child's parents, another banquet is held, to which the neighbors are also invited. On this occasion all kinds of honors are shown to the foster mother and her husband. The foster parents are granted the right to be the first to wash their hands, and upon their return home the parents of the child must seat them on their horses, i.e., when they mount, the stirrups on the other side must be held. The foster parents return home with [431] the child, loaded with all kinds of presents, animals, clothes, money.

The foster child remains with the foster parents during the course of eight or nine years, and then it is taken to the real parents. It hardly need be said that the child, having spent its early years in someone else's home, where it grew up and learned to walk, talk, and to love its foster mother and those surroundings, now has difficulty in adjusting itself to the new situation -- at [154] first the father's house seems almost like a prison to him. For this reason the child is allowed to visit the foster parents frequently. If the foster child is an orphan, however, he remains in the home and under the care of his foster parents until he is married.

/21/ The foster child is obligated to defend the interests of the foster parents, i.e. of that family whose members reared him. He is required, for instance, to search for a lost article belonging to his foster parents, to find the thief and to call him to account, and it is a great disgrace to him if he is unable to do this. In the same way, if someone offends the foster parents and they are not strong enough to pay back the insult, their ward must stand up for them. Let us suppose, for instance, that some prince has beaten a peasant. In this case the ward of the injured peasant must de- [683] mand satisfaction, not from the princely offender himself, for "his blood is unequal to that of a peasant," but from his foster parent, a peasant, and he is the one who has to answer for the insult inflicted upon the foster parent of another prince. If a peasant foster-father gets into any kind of trouble, his princely ward endeavors by hook or by crook to rescue him from his difficulties. In such cases, if the ward himself is still immature and unable to help his foster parents, then his parents act in his place.

/10 cont./

867 579 immediately upon their return home revert to the practice acquired in childhood -- stealing. This is of course not the fault of the school or of secondary education, but of the traditional views on this "trade," contact with which kills every other way of looking at it, as the lone wheat-stalk is smothered among the weeds that surround it.

579 In his stealing, the Abkhaz is treacherous. The best of friends, to all appearances, do not hesitate to steal from each other, and in Abkhazia it is no rare thing for brother to steal from brother, father from son, or son from father. It is almost proverbial that when an Abkhaz has no one to steal from, he robs himself. There have been instances of an Abkhaz stealing a horse from a neighbor on a dark night, taking it miles and miles away and exchanging it for another, riding back home on this fresh horse the same night, and the next morning, the minute his neighbor raised the alarm, rushing over and being the first to offer his sympathy and joining the chorus of people calling down curses on the thief and dashing off with the others in frenzied pursuit.

● 685 579 692 The Abkhaz thief will not admit his crime, even /11/ when he could be convicted on the evidence of witnesses. When a robbery case is tried at village meetings, a decision of the judge in favor of the accused is not infrequently influenced by the audacity of the latter's pretexts, by his shameless subterfuges, and by his so-called "talking circles around them." In general at such [537] meetings, any exhibition of sly rhetoric, however shameless, on the part of a notorious thief finds not only attentive listeners but even admirers. "He saved himself by the bravery of his speech," they say in such cases.

And though such "eloquence" on the part of the thief often saves the guilty one from punishment, the victim, understandably, does not believe in his innocence and tries to get back at him at the proper moment for his losses, according to the formula of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

682 At present vengeance for spilled blood is on the wane, but at one time it was one of the most important features of Abkhaz life. The custom of blood-revenge puts the relatives of a person

/37 cont./

been born; God save me from such a marriage." And so he planned to kill the newborn baby; when everyone in the house had fallen asleep, he slipped quietly in, carried the child out, ripped open her belly, and threw it upon the flat roof of the hut. Then the two thieves went on their way. The child's wailing awakened the women, who found her, sewed up the wound with silk thread, and thus saved her from death. And no matter how hard the thief about whom the above-mentioned prophecy was made tried to find a wife, he was /38/ unsuccessful. Meanwhile the girl who he thought was dead reached marriageable age and one day somehow met the thief. He immediately fell in love with her and married her. Then it was shown how inevitably every predestination and decision made by the "creator-forgers" is fulfilled.

VII.

Prayers in Honor of the Deities

Prayer is the name given to those religious ceremonies and rites accompanied by sacrifices in honor of the gods which are performed according to a definite pattern set and sanctified from olden times.

Each deity may independently show, within his sphere of activity, grace or wrath toward man; for instance, he may send sickness or misfortune on him or his cattle, etc. The Abkhaz easily determine by special signs whether the deities' anger is the result of deviations from the fixed pattern of the religious rites. To avert the wrath of the gods caused by omissions in prayers and sacrifices, they must repeat the offerings and complete whatever was omitted the first time; uncorrected omissions and mistakes in ritual weigh heavily as guilt felt toward the angry gods, even upon generations far removed from the sinners. If anyone falls ill in consequence of neglect in ritual toward one or another god, he must offer him a sacrifice in order to recover. If he is

/10 cont./

867 immediately upon their return home revert to the practice ac-
579 quired in childhood -- stealing. This is of course not the fault of the school or of secondary education, but of the traditional views on this "trade," contact with which kills every other way of looking at it, as the lone wheat-stalk is smothered among the weeds that surround it.

579 In his stealing, the Abkhaz is treacherous. The best of friends, to all appearances, do not hesitate to steal from each other, and in Abkhazia it is no rare thing for brother to steal from brother, father from son, or son from father. It is almost proverbial that when an Abkhaz has no one to steal from, he robs himself. There have been instances of an Abkhaz stealing a horse from a neighbor on a dark night, taking it miles and miles away and exchanging it for another, riding back home on this fresh horse the same night, and the next morning, the minute his neighbor raised the alarm, rushing over and being the first to offer his sympathy and joining the chorus of people calling down curses on the thief and dashing off with the others in frenzied pursuit.

685 The Abkhaz thief will not admit his crime, even /11/ when
579 he could be convicted on the evidence of witnesses. When a
692 robbery case is tried at village meetings, a decision of the judge in favor of the accused is not infrequently influenced by the audacity of the latter's pretexts, by his shameless subterfuges, and by his so-called "talking circles around them." In general at such
[537] meetings, any exhibition of sly rhetoric, however shameless, on the part of a notorious thief finds not only attentive listeners but even admirers. "He saved himself by the bravery of his speech," they say in such cases.

And though such "eloquence" on the part of the thief often saves the guilty one from punishment, the victim, understandably, does not believe in his innocence and tries to get back at him at the proper moment for his losses, according to the formula of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

682 At present vengeance for spilled blood is on the wane, but at one time it was one of the most important features of Abkhaz life. The custom of blood-revenge puts the relatives of a person

/18 cont./

428 (eits'bshakhu /see foreign text/). After the settlement for seniority and minority, all that is left is divided equally among the brothers; in addition, the youngest receives the father's house, yard, etc. Sisters receive less than brothers.

593 Kind and affable in public, the Abkhaz at home is rather stern, imperious, and so taciturn that it is as if he were too lazy, or at any rate not sufficiently inclined, to spare a single kind or friendly word for the members of his household. The Abkhaz woman enjoys a great deal of freedom. She is no less busy than 562 462 the man; for instance, she carries the maize to the mill herself, and in some places she grinds it herself with a hand mill. In summer, she works, hoe in hand, side by side with the man in the maize-field. The wives of the members of the higher classes [565] toil no less than their husbands, but, on the other hand, they enjoy more freedom and are held more in esteem than is the case otherwise.

562 A woman is treated with respect and esteem by young and old. Women attend community meetings, mourning rites, [535] funeral banquets; they are present at the gatherings of the men and dance with them. There have been instances of women [579] being the leaders of the abragi in night raids. Women perform religious rites and ceremonies. But with all this, the Abkhaz woman is expected to be innocent and modest, and to speak to older men politely and courteously.

562 If her husband divorces her without sufficient reason, the 586 Abkhaz woman has the right to appear at the village meeting and [692] defend herself. And she skillfully uses this right: she goes to the meeting with as much determination as her husband, and defends herself with great eloquence. While the husband can divorce his wife on various grounds, she can do the same to her husband if he has done her any wrong.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

778 is that the Ilori " icon " is omnipotent, and they, therefore, try hard not to incur its wrath. It is inflexibly just and punishes harshly those who deviate from the law; it is a goddess of equity, as it were; a 778 kind of Themis, and in the practical life of the southern Abkhasians 629 and of the Samurzaqanoans, there is, therefore, no " saint ", no [690] " icon ", no deity equal to the Ilori " icon "; it determines finally and irrevocably all matters, whether civil or criminal, which the crown court has not been able to settle to the satisfaction of the popular idea of fair play. Even in the case of matters upon which judgment has been passed by crown courts, but where the decision has not satisfied the disputing parties, appeal is made to its tribunal. The trial is conducted as follows: A kind of arbitration court is set up which imposes upon [782] the accused the obligation to take a propitiatory oath before the Ilori " icon ". If the matter is unimportant it is determined by a village tribunal which provides one or two co-swearers; but if the matter is serious (insult to one's honour, murder, etc.) the representatives of the parties participate in the trial with the judges. " Swearing in " follows, but the number of co-swearers increases; thus, for instance, 1–2 *t'avadi-s*, 2–3 *aznauri-s*, 5–6 peasants, 1–2 namesakes, 1–2 maternal relations, 1–2 relations of the female line of the *gvari*, etc., are frequently appointed as co-swearers. The oath is administered on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*. The accused swears before the icon that he is innocent, the co-swearers confirm his declaration, and there the matter ends. If the accused is unable to take the oath, he submits obediently to the punishment imposed upon him. From the day of the taking of the oath onwards the plaintiff breaks off all relationship with the defendant and his co-swearers. " The icon is between us (parts, separates us)," says the orthodox Abkhaz. It is impossible to evade this custom; it is an Abkhasian's profound conviction that infringement of this custom (the re-establishment of relationship), as also [696] a false oath, will not pass unpunished; the " icon " punishes with [653] sickness and even with death, if the accused does not come to his senses in time and confess himself in the wrong. At the death of all the members of the guilty family, the wrath of the " icon " recoils on the plaintiff. To avert the chastisement of the " icon ", as of Abkhasian gods in general, the guilty person must pray and make offerings to the " icon "; he must also compensate his opponent's material losses and obtain the latter's consent thereto; they both set out for Ilori with gifts, prescribed by sorceresses, and they pray there to the " icon " for forgiveness of their sins; they bring goats, bullocks, and money. This is called the reciprocal forgiveness-prayer (*cyba-nbhwara*). From this day normal relations are restored between the parties. If one of the parties does not agree to make peace, the other party can *akho-dchokhora*, " buy back his head," i.e. redeem

/50 cont./

782 On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when
733 the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and
[796] when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder-
[562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

782 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is
● 731 offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the
789 herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre-
[533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva rysshva
[821] and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second,
782 to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one
731 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, re-
574 minding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

/51 cont./

782 one of those present begins to glorify the god: "Anchva
731 dukhva zlyphkha khkhaura!" "O you who descends from
574 heaven with lightning and ascend to heaven with thunder, who knows the number of the stars in heaven and of the sands at the bottom of the sea ..." etc., and he concludes the poem with the words, "akhdau." All those present, divided into two groups, repeat every line of the hymn in turn, always three times over.

782 The killing of one of the herd by lightning unfailingly
821 evokes prayer to Aphi; on the other hand, if he is not appeased by sacrifice, a repetition of his visit must be expected. The owner of the dead animal invites the inhabitants of the village, without distinction as to age or sex. On the spot where the animal was killed, a tower is built about one and a half sagene in height, so that beasts of prey cannot climb it. All those present surround the killed animal, join hands, and dance, half of them singing "Voetla" and the other half answering "Chaupar," and they raise the animal onto the tower, still singing and dancing, and leave it there as a victim for the birds of prey. Then the owner of the animal killed by lightning sacrifices a bull to Aphi, at the same time thanking him for the present visit and begging him nonetheless to spare him future visits. Various dishes are prepared from the meat of the sacrificed animal; bread, cheese, and wine are brought, and those present feast all day long at the expense of the man who suffered the loss. The day the animal was killed by lightning becomes so memorable in the family that has thus been visited by Aphi that neither the head of the family /52/ nor his children will give
[527] [431] anyone anything on the anniversary of that day, saying that they expect a visit from Aphi on that day.

[766] The same ceremony is performed when a person has been struck by lightning. During the dance around the corpse, none of the relatives of the dead man dares to weep; otherwise all the participants will be struck dead by a thunder-bolt.

/57 cont./

[782] [796] [262] are made for each member of the family. The chickens must be fried and the kvakvari baked before cockcrow. Just after the first cockcrow the master of the house puts bowls on the table, into each of which he puts a chicken and four kvakvari; to each one he fastens a wax candle. A brazier with coals is placed near the table. All the members of the family kneel down around the table, each opposite his bowl, [789] and the eldest person in the family, after removing his cap and throwing incense in the brazier, asks God to preserve him and his family from stomach disorders. After the prayer, all rise, turn to the right, and bow to the east; then everyone eats his portion, and each does his best to finish the meal without fail before dawn.

[796] [262] On New Year's Eve, after supper, a prayer is again offered in each family to ask for all sorts of blessings. For this occasion a rectangular pie is prepared, stuffed with cheese; this is put on a board to which a wax candle is fastened. The whole family kneels around it, and the eldest in the clan throws incense on the coals and says the prayer; then the pie is eaten and the leftovers burned on the coals. This prayer is called Kalinda. On the first day of the New Year the prayer called Gunykhva (prayer of the heart) is [262] offered. For this, a small loaf of wheat-bread stuffed with an egg is prepared for each member of the family. The head of [789] the family raises a loaf to the breast of each member, praying to God to preserve them from heart ailments. After the prayer, each one eats his loaf.

24.

Drought

• [731] [789] During a severe summer drought all the village girls gather in their best attire near the river. They divide themselves into three groups and make a raft of branches, cover this with straw, and make a doll, which they then dress up as a /58/ woman. When all these preparations are finished, a

/58 cont./

731 789 donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva [539] dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins [825] to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

25.

Saints

776 778 [184] Independent of the general worship of all the deities discussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny, Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke 782 their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in [796] fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.

[231] On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

6. *Akhyò Zoshàn*

The Abkhasians ascribe diseases generally to supernatural influences or gods, but some diseases have their own special gods. The god of small-pox, for example, is *Akhyò Zoshàn* (the golden Zoskhan), and also his consort, the goddess *Khania Shkwàkwa* (Khania the white). How important are the gods of the Abkhasians may be judged from the following circumstance which took place during the spring of 1914 in one of the settlements of the village Jgerdi. Throughout the winter and spring of the year Abkhasia was in the grip of a severe epidemic of small-pox. In order to check the spread of the disease vaccinators were sent to the affected areas. The following account of what happened was described to me by P. Janashia, one of the vaccinators. A certain settlement, fearing that the gods might wreak vengeance upon them, refused to admit the vaccinators; they preferred to safeguard themselves against this terrible disease, *atswarp'shdzà* (small-pox), by the adoption of the gods. *Atswà* denotes skin, rind, and *ap'shdzà*, pretty, beautiful; the whole, in translation, denoting " that which decorates (beautifies) the skin ".

By pooling their resources, the settlement raised enough money to buy a couple of snow-white goats and a sufficiency of provisions, and made an expedition into the forest. Here, amidst the quietude and peace of over-hanging leaves, a sumptuous feast was prepared for the divine guests. When everything was ready, and the victim had been placed, according to custom, on *ashwamkyadi*, the head of the settlement said the prayer and made the offering to the gods. Nearby stood two bedsteads, adorned with silk bedclothes, on which sat two young women, an *azhauri* and a peasant woman; their naked breasts were covered with silk handkerchiefs. The whole assembly knelt down, while the head of the settlement implored the gods to accept their offering by kissing the breasts of the most beautiful women of the settlement, and thus become, in accordance with the ancestral custom, adopted sons of the settlement. Near the " foster-mothers of gods " stood two of the finest horses, one with a side saddle. The sumptuous feast followed the ceremony of adoption, and afterwards the people, holding the horses by the bridle, on which were to be riding the newly adopted gods, *Akhyò Zoshàn* and *Khania Shkwàkwa*, escorted the precious guests to the accompaniment of song, far away from the settlement. Thus they " turned away ", or warded off, the small-pox.

" You may not believe it," an Abkhaz from the settlement told me, " but this ' adoption ' saved us from the small-pox; not one of us fell a victim to it. You, the learned, have caused our ruin by bringing down upon us the anger of the gods of our fathers," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

6. *Akhyə Zoshən*

The Abkhasians ascribe diseases generally to supernatural influences or gods, but some diseases have their own special gods. The god of small-pox, for example, is *Akhyə Zoshən* (the golden Zoskhan), and also his consort, the goddess *Khanla Shkwdkwa* (Khania the white). How important are the gods of the Abkhasians may be judged from the following circumstance which took place during the spring of 1914 in one of the settlements of the village Jgerdi. Throughout the winter and spring of the year Abkhasia was in the grip of a severe epidemic of small-pox. In order to check the spread of the disease vaccinators were sent to the affected areas. The following account of what happened was described to me by P. Janashia, one of the vaccinators. A certain settlement, fearing that the gods might wreak vengeance upon them, refused to admit the vaccinators; they preferred to safeguard themselves against this terrible disease, *atswarp'shdzə* (small-pox), by the adoption of the gods. *Atswə* denotes skin, rind, and *ap'shdzə*, pretty, beautiful; the whole, in translation, denoting " that which decorates (beautifies) the skin ".

By pooling their resources, the settlement raised enough money to buy a couple of snow-white goats and a sufficiency of provisions, and made an expedition into the forest. Here, amidst the quietude and peace of over-hanging leaves, a sumptuous feast was prepared for the divine guests. When everything was ready, and the victim had been placed, according to custom, on *ashwamkyaat'*, the head of the settlement said the prayer and made the offering to the gods. Nearby stood two bedsteads, adorned with silk bedclothes, on which sat two young women, an *azmauri* and a peasant woman; their naked breasts were covered with silk handkerchiefs. The whole assembly knelt down, while the head of the settlement implored the gods to accept their offering by kissing the breasts of the most beautiful women of the settlement, and thus become, in accordance with the ancestral custom, adopted sons of the settlement. Near the " foster-mothers of gods " stood two of the finest horses, one with a side saddle. The sumptuous feast followed the ceremony of adoption, and afterwards the people, holding the horses by the bridle, on which were to be riding the newly adopted gods, *Akhyə Zoshən* and *Khanla Shkwdkwa*, escorted the precious guests to the accompaniment of song, far away from the settlement. Thus they " turned away ", or warded off, the small-pox.

" You may not believe it," an Abkhaz from the settlement told me, " but this ' adoption ' saved us from the small-pox; not one of us fell a victim to it. You, the learned, have caused our ruin by bringing down upon us the anger of the gods of our fathers," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

/37 cont./

777 been born; God save me from such a marriage." And so he
776 planned to kill the newborn baby; when everyone in the
539 house had fallen asleep, he slipped quietly in, carried the child out, ripped open her belly, and threw it upon the flat roof of the hut. Then the two thieves went on their way. The child's wailing awakened the women, who found her, sewed up the wound with silk thread, and thus saved her from death. And no matter how hard the thief about whom the above-mentioned prophecy was made tried to find a wife, he was /38/ unsuccessful. Meanwhile the girl who he thought was dead reached marriageable age and one day somehow met the thief. He immediately fell in love with her and married her. Then it was shown how inevitably every predestination and decision made by the "creator-forgers" is fulfilled.

VII.

Prayers in Honor of the Deities

782 Prayer is the name given to those religious ceremonies and rites accompanied by sacrifices in honor of the gods which are performed according to a definite pattern set and sanctified from olden times.

[776] Each deity may independently show, within his sphere of activity, grace or wrath toward man; for instance, he may send sickness or misfortune on him or his cattle, etc.

[787] The Abkhaz easily determine by special signs whether the deities' anger is the result of deviations from the fixed pattern

[688] of the religious rites. To avert the wrath of the gods caused by omissions in prayers and sacrifices, they must repeat the offerings and complete whatever was omitted the first time; uncorrected omissions and mistakes in ritual weigh heavily as guilt felt toward the angry gods, even upon generations

[755] far removed from the sinners. If anyone falls ill in consequence of neglect in ritual toward one or another god, he

[753] must offer him a sacrifice in order to recover. If he is

/38 cont./

782 755 753 unable to perform that act because of his sickness, he then presents something as a pledge, saying, "If you (God) are sending this (sickness) because of my guilt, then relieve me; I shall pray to you as is fitting and as the sorcerer will instruct me." But when he does not know which deity is angry and is causing his sickness, he says, "No matter what caused this illness, I shall do whatever the sorcerers may recommend." The pledge is specially set aside as a sacred object until his vow is fulfilled. The performers of prayers during such religious rituals are men or women, depending upon the sex of the deity in whose honor the ceremony is performed.

I shall proceed to a description of the ceremonies themselves.

1.

/39/

782 755 The Ceremony in Honor of Mother Earth

A sinless woman, taking six nuts and a few grains of millet, leads the sick one to an alder tree. Here she carries the three nuts and several grains of millet around the tree in the name of the earth; then she does the same thing around a nut-tree (walnut) in the name of Adabna, begging him to have pity on the sick person. She then makes [532 789] a richly-dressed doll in the image of a man, buries it in the earth for the "liberation" of the sick person, and says, "Play and amuse yourself with this instead of with the sick one." After this, a large millet-loaf is baked -- "the bread of Mother Earth" -- and two other long loaves of bread for Adabna. The same woman takes a piece from each of the four sides of the first loaf, both the loaves in honor of Adabna, a candle, and incense, and with the sick person goes to the crossing of three roads, where she places the pieces of the millet-loaf at one road, the two loaves of Adabna at the second, and at the third she lights the candles and places chevyaki (shoes) there, saying; "Mistress Earth, these are your shoes!" She then places the sick person on his knees

/39 cont./

782 among the articles so laid out, with a "chikila" (a kind of
755 veil) on his head, and begs, "Adgil-ankhu, Atula-ankhuse, grant him your favor! Give him firmess of head, heart, and body! Give him color, skin, and bone! Give him back the will to speak and to work! Give him strength! Deliver him from evil," etc. In the same way she also prays to Adabna. After this, she removes the chikila from the sick person with a nut-twig, raises him, strikes him on the back with a whip, and says, "Go, from this day I grant you freedom (azati)," and then both go home. At home a loaf of millet-bread is broken in two; two women each take a half and stand on the two sides of the hearth opposite each other; the sick person passes three times between them under the loaf, while one of the women exclaims, "Give me the one who has assumed the Hebrew belief," and the other, "Give me the convert to Christianity."

●753 The Abkhaz is convinced that the invisible being that
755 settled in the sick man hastens immediately upon leaving him to enter someone else, and so, to help him find a new victim, they pray to him at the crossroads, where there is a continuous /40/ traffic of people, and, subsequently, a victim is always found it is unnecessary to search very long. And since an illness can be caught from a spot where a person accidentally fell or sat down, the rite of appeasing the
[823] earth must be performed on the very same spot of the falling or sitting from which the sickness originated; the doll must be buried on exactly the same spot. This is why, in order not to catch something evil from the spot where he sat down,
[789] the Abkhaz spits three times on getting up and says, "Here stood the house and courtyard of my grandfather!"

2.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Water

782 When someone is ill for a long time with a fever, a
755 female fortune-teller is asked for advice and help; she usually
791

/40 cont./

782 prescribes a prayer to the water, which is thought to be the
755 cause of the illness. Since the protectress of the waters,
[791] the "Mother of Water," is a woman, a sinless old woman is invited to the ceremony.

776 A large, clear, inaccessible fresh-water lake is thought
[778] to be the residence of the "Mother of Water"; she may also dwell in a pure spring, untouched by anything unclean, such as a pig, etc. The "Mother of Water" sometimes comes out of her dwelling to the shore, and at that time anyone may see her. This is how the Abkhaz describe this "Mother of Water." She is a most beautiful, bewitching woman; her locks are incomparable and chestnut in color; her eyes are laughing. The Abkhaz who has been bewitched by her talks
●753 to his comrades thus: "Eh, brothers, I have been vanquished
776 by the 'Mother of the Water,' and from now on I no longer
539 belong to your society. Recently I rode into a dense forest and saw a table spread there under a big oak; a mirror and a lighted candle stood nearby; the 'Mother of the Water' was sitting in front of the mirror, smiling at her own beauty and combing her long hair, which reached the ground. My arms fell to my sides from exhaustion; I could not take my eyes from that wonderful vision. When she saw me, she quickly arranged her hair and came towards me. I felt giddy... Without a word she raised all ten fingers, asking me, 'Are you willing to be my husband for ten years or not?' I shook my head, but she would not stop, and with the proper number of fingers raised, she offered me in turn nine, eight, seven years, and so on /41/ of marriage. As I kept on refusing, she finally raised her last little finger and fixed her gaze upon me. I immediately gave my consent..." (1).

1. "Etnograf. pis'ma iz Abkhazii /Ethnographical letters from Abkhazia/," Konst. Machavariani, Droeba, 1884-1885.

755
782 The "pure" old woman who was invited to the ceremony,

/41 cont./

515 782 823 [783] Fearing to defile it, the Abkhaz avoids bathing in running water; if he bathes, upon coming out /42/ of the water he takes three stones and says, "I sinned against you today; I went into the water and bathed, but you, forgive me." With this prayer, he passes the pebbles around his head with his hands and throws them into the water.

3.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Rainbow

● 753 [755] [782] The ceremony in honor of the rainbow, which is not obligatory for all, is performed for the greater part on persons whose sickness, according to the female fortune-teller, is caused by the rainbow. A prolonged yellowness of the face, a weakening of the organism, instability of character -- the [821] Abkhaz attributes all these to the fact that the sick person entered water at the very moment when the rainbow was drinking from it.

755 782 "Sinless" old women, having planned a sacrifice and promised a prayer, lead the sick person out to a brook; they take with them two fried capons, two stuffed loaves of unleavened bread in the shape of a tongue, and other provisions, as in the performance of the ceremony in honor of the water. On both sides of the brook, clean objects are laid out, such as clothes, silver, etc., a little bridge made of thread is thrown over the river from one bank to another. Having prepared all this, the praying-woman, with a doll that has been prepared beforehand in her hands, walks around the sick person, who is kneeling down covered with a piece of calico, and prays for him to the rainbow, known by the name Eliaphshi; then she takes a candle and addresses a similar prayer to the "Mistress Mother of the Water," and her "lord husband." After praying over the provisions she takes some [789] of each dish and throws it into the water; she places the doll in a pumpkin, and, after adorning the latter with lighted

/43 cont./

782 from the treetop. May the fresh twig, when I step on it with
824 my foot, first grow stronger and then, being strengthened, grow fresh (soft), etc."

6.

782 A Prayer in Honor of Adnqa or (the same thing) "the
755 Outer Ones"

[775] The souls of the dead, the "outer ones," are often the
[753] cause of sickness in man and his cattle. They often become angry, and the outward signs of such anger are frequent yawning, sleepiness, and general exhaustion visited upon the culprit. If the one afflicted does not satisfy the angered "outer ones" with offerings and prayers, an inevitable death awaits him. On one of the Saturdays a meal is prepared of young rams' meat, chicken, sour milk, and the meat of a cow, if the soul of a woman is angered, and all these provisions are laid out on a tablecloth under the eaves, on both sides of which are placed a dress and valuable /44/ objects.

The sick man or woman is placed in the middle of a circle and either a man or a woman, according to the sex of the sick person, prays and begs the living and the dead (Angi-phsngis) to have mercy upon the sick and to grant him health and to accept the food prepared for them. The person pronouncing the prayer for the sick one then passes his hand over the back of the sick person and gives him freedom from his sickness ("azati"). If the ailment is thought to be caused by the soul of a prince or of some other personage of
[825] high rank, a tethered horse is untied and released in a field at the concluding words of the prayer: "This (horse) is for your soul." According to Abkhaz belief, such a horse soon swells up and dies.

/47 cont./

782 and light, well-being and success in everything; grant
821 beauty, charm, and elegance to our maidens so that, like you, they may shine, glitter, and warm people." In the prayer to the moon, they express the wish that the children should become like it in brilliance.

/48/ 15.

Prayer to Khphath and Khvnash

782 This prayer is offered on the Saturday of the week of
[796] Thomas, with cheese, bread, wine, candles, etc. brought as offerings. The aim is to solicit health and prosperity for the family. On one of the following Saturdays a similar prayer is addressed to Khvnash. Khphath and Mdzhath are
[551] men's names in Abkhazia.

16.

"Ananaha"

782 Anan means "mother." The oldest woman of the
776 household places some money on a loaf of bread (Anan l phara = money of Anan) and goes into the kitchen-garden where she places three cucumber-leaves on the loaf of bread and the same number on her own head. She then fastens a lighted candle to a cucumber stalk and, holding incense in her hands, prays, "Mothers and creators, do not let me have grief from my sons: do not cast me into sorrow because of them, but let me see them prosper." A similar prayer is said to Ashatsanha, the god-creator or god-father. A cow and money are offered in sacrifice to him. During Lent, the village maidens also used to pray to the "Mother of the Waters" that she might grant them long and thick hair.

17.

Prayer for the Ear

• 753 The Abkhaz says, "ahsa r lmha i klou," which means

/48 cont./
753 "hung on the girls' ears." Rheumatic pains in the knees, instability of character, general weakness of the organism of a person, etc. -- all these are consequences of a
789 "weighty cause." To avert the sickness, a button is fastened to the ear like an earring. An innocent and sinless woman
755 leads the ailing person to a nut-bush and makes him kneel;
782 she drives seven /49/ sticks of nut-wood into the ground around him, fastens a lighted candle to each of them, and prays
[776] on behalf of the sick person to hanipha, the genius, walking along the rocks.

18.

Prayer in Honor of the Supreme Being

776
753 This supreme being is believed to be the cause of all kinds of sickness in man. When the body-temperature of a seriously sick person fluctuates greatly and he is alternately thrown into a fever and chills, when he faints or loses consciousness and regains it momentarily, and then begins to toss and become delirious, to sing songs, to mumble prayers, etc., the Abkhaz believe that all these severe pathological conditions are unmistakable signs of action by a superior force, by the supreme deities (Antsa r mzz) on the sick person -- "there is a divine cause." The Abkhaz are convinced that this "divine cause" has taken up its abode in the sick
755 person and therefore they say, Antsa drthoup, i.e., "a god
[787] came to visit." When the female fortune-teller confirms that the cause of the sickness is indeed that "a god took up his abode" in the sick person, then everyone in the house must assume a gay appearance and rejoice instead of grieving, for "where the god has taken up his abode, there can be nothing but rejoicing." Therefore the village youth gathers in the house of such a patient and all begin to sing and dance, and even the sick person is made to take part in the dances and singing, if he is strong enough to do so.

[782] The prayer-sacrifice is carried out near the house on the edge of a forest. The offering is a goat or a kid, a

[765 cont.] The mother, The wife, and the foster mother mourn at the grave for forty days in the morning and in the evening, and for the same length of time, or sometimes for a whole year, food for the deceased is put on the table during meals.

[766] The first memorial service takes place on the fortieth day, the second one during the second year, usually in the autumn. On the evening preceding the latter (ap's-khuvra = assigning to the soul), the clothes, the horse with the saddle, and the weapons of the deceased are laid out, there is mourning in the house and at the grave, and sacrificial animals are slaughtered. A party of village members in mourning clothes and barefoot bring up animals and food; among them a man carries lighted candles on a twig-shaped holder, as do the oxen on their horns. The next day the horse of the dead man is led around in a circle three times in a field, and the relatives follow it, lamenting in mourning clothes; after this, the soul of the dead, which until then had remained invisibly among them for the time being, has finally departed from the earth. After the memorial feast the youths and men hold oratory exercises, shooting matches, and races, as among the Khevsur (see p. 738 [untranslated], and below, p.30).

The burial grounds, which contain the graves for each kin group, usually lie on elevations and are fenced in. Small houses of planks with shingle roofs--in contrast to the usual building style--are erected over the graves, which are themselves lined with boards, and fruit trees are planted nearby.

Among the Abkhaz, too, there is the belief that the souls of the dead have the same needs as the living, and for this reason they build these grave-shelters, lay slices of melon and cucumber on the graves, and for a year after death put food for them on the table during the meals. At the second memorial celebration the father of the house places in the yard a millet-dumpling over which wine has been poured and pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animal. If the souls are neglected, they come to the house at night and whistle, whereupon food and wine is given to them. When the souls, the "outer ones," are angered, they bring about weakness and sickness among animals and men. Then one tries to console

[770 cont.]

231 (atlar-tšoup'), they lay the animal on a quickly erected, three-
[782] meter-high framework or in a tree. The owner sacrifices an ox and prays to be spared in the future; then they eat the meat of the sacrificial animal, bread, and cheese, drink wine, and feast
766 the entire day. The Abkhaz proceed in the same way for a person struck by lightning, but no one may weep lest the god become angry (see p. 87).

789 During drought one also turns to Ap'i to send rain; an
[785] ox is sacrificed, and at the feast songs of thanks and praise (antšva-ryššva) are sung in alternating chant. In order to evoke rain magic similar to that customarily practiced among the Balkan peoples is used (cf. also p. 64). The girls from the village stricken with drought place a female doll embodying the drought on a donkey and lead it to the river; here they put the doll on a raft made of twigs and straw, ignite it, and allow it to drift. They pull the donkey by force through the water, and if he brays, there will be rain.

755 Various gods are called upon in case of illness. Ague,
[753] delirium, and the like accompanying serious illness are attributed to the presence of the supreme god (Antsar mz) in the body of the sufferer. In order to cure him, they sing and dance about him and even force him to do the same; then they sacrifice bread
[784] and a goat or sheep in the vicinity of the house, during which no woman may be present; an old man with a candle circles the sick person and pleads with the god to forgive him and deliver him. He also prays afterwards to Michael-Gabriel.

In case of fever they look for help from the "Mother of
[776] the Waters"; she lives, according to them, in a clear lake or spring, is beautiful, has brown hair and laughing eyes, and likes to live for a while with a man, like the mermaids. An old woman touches the water with some object belonging to the feverish person and begs the goddess to release him if she has enthralled him. Then she ladles up a few drops of water on some alder-leaves and holds them over the fire in the house so that the fever may leave as quickly as the water on the leaves. Finally the old woman moves away quickly, with the wish that the fever, too,

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

539 [789] benefactor, the moon, the Abkhasians fire at the monster and thereby drive him away." [1]

(3) The Moon and the Sun. A beautiful Abkhasian widow woman had a son and a daughter, who often absented themselves from home for the whole day; they would go off early in the morning and return only late in the evening. No amount of coaxing or tenderness on the part of the mother sufficed to keep the children at home or stop them from indulging in their daily adventure, so she decided to shadow them. She found they were seated under the shadow of an ancient oak, in a thick forest, enjoying themselves in an agreeable pastime with the moon and the sun. Before them were all sorts of eatables. The mother, flying into a passion, flung fresh dung at the moon and the sun. The sun-sister, being a more fastidious creature, washed herself, but the less particular moon-brother did not do so, and hence arose the dark patches on the moon; the brother, the moon, and the sister, the sun,[2] then soared up to the sky for ever, while the widow and her children returned home."

821 Here I will also note that the Abkhasians always welcome the new moon by looking at its reflection through a mirror, or over a silver piece.

[753] A certain mainly infantile disease, similar to convulsions, is called by the Abkhasians *àmzakra*, i.e. "to be caught by the moon".

(e) *Àmra-nə̀ħwa*, Prayer to the Sun.

796 [776] When he has finished the invocation addressed to Àmza (the moon), the supplicant takes the sun-shaped cake, and, with the women surrounding him, he says: "Thou, Àmra, *Àyt'ar intswakhwədù*, the great part of the great *Àyt'ar*, grant warmth, and caress the women of our family! Increase our cattle," etc., and then spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà*) in the usual manner, uttering *wootsw*.

According to D. I. Gulià, in the village of Dchilou they use the form *Amera* instead of *Àmra*.

(f) *Anàp'a-nàga*.

[776] After that the supplicant takes *alaħwàra* (a large mortar) and, addressing himself to the god *Anàp'a-nàga*, says: "Thou, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, send us the warmth of thine eyes and of

[1] Exactly what *Atə̀wyə* denotes is difficult to explain. In connection with the above quoted tale, the etymology of this word may, however, perhaps elucidate its significance. *Atə̀* denotes the barn- or screech-owl; *wy* may be the root from the word *a-owyə̀* (man); consequently *atə̀wyə* may denote "man-owl". And by *atə̀wyə* is, perhaps, understood the sister devouring the brother-moon.

[2] Their gender is often confused: sometimes the moon and the sun are sisters or brothers, sometimes the moon is brother and the sun sister.

[3] I think the Georgian word *missi*, cause, is derived from the Abkhasian *amsəs*, cause (from *àmza*, moon). (It is doubtful! Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 - RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

778 is that the Ilori " icon " is omnipotent, and they, therefore, try hard not to incur its wrath. It is inflexibly just and punishes harshly those who deviate from the law; it is a goddess of equity, as it were; a 778 kind of Themis, and in the practical life of the southern Abkhasians 629 and of the Samurzaqanoans, there is, therefore, no " saint ", no 690 " icon ", no deity equal to the Ilori " icon "; it determines finally and irrevocably all matters, whether civil or criminal, which the crown court has not been able to settle to the satisfaction of the popular idea of fair play. Even in the case of matters upon which judgment has been passed by crown courts, but where the decision has not satisfied the disputing parties, appeal is made to its tribunal. The trial is conducted as follows: A kind of arbitration court is set up which imposes upon 782 the accused the obligation to take a propitiatory oath before the Ilori " icon ". If the matter is unimportant it is determined by a village tribunal which provides one or two co-swearers; but if the matter is serious (insult to one's honour, murder, etc.) the representatives of the parties participate in the trial with the judges. " Swearing in " follows, but the number of co-swearers increases; thus, for instance, 1–2 *t'avadi-s*, 2–3 *aznauri-s*, 5–6 peasants, 1–2 namesakes, 1–2 maternal relations, 1–2 relations of the female line of the *gvari*, etc., are frequently appointed as co-swearers. The oath is administered on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*. The accused swears before the icon that he is innocent, the co-swearers confirm his declaration, and there the matter ends. If the accused is unable to take the oath, he submits obediently to the punishment imposed upon him. From the day of the taking of the oath onwards the plaintiff breaks off all relationship with the defendant and his co-swearers. " The icon is between us (parts, separates us)," says the orthodox Abkhaz. It is impossible to evade this custom; it is an Abkhasian's profound conviction that infringement of this custom (the re-establishment of relationship), as also 786 a false oath, will not pass unpunished; the " icon " punishes with 783 sickness and even with death, if the accused does not come to his senses in time and confess himself in the wrong. At the death of all the members of the guilty family, the wrath of the " icon " recoils on the plaintiff. To avert the chastisement of the " icon ", as of Abkhasian gods in general, the guilty person must pray and make offerings to the " icon "; he must also compensate his opponent's material losses and obtain the latter's consent thereto; they both set out for Ilori with gifts, prescribed by sorceresses, and they pray there to the " icon " for forgiveness of their sins; they bring goats, bullocks, and money. This is called the reciprocal forgiveness-prayer (*cyba-nəlwara*). From this day normal relations are restored between the parties. If one of the parties does not agree to make peace, the other party can *akhs-dchəkhəra*, " buy back his head," i.e. redeem

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Aàzvibzha

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdzyla-nəhwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdzyla-nəhwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdzyla-nəhwa*; *Àdzyla* denotes tree, *nəhwa* (*anəhwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdzyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-ɟ*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateyna, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 154–7.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

6. *Akhyə Zoshən*

The Abkhasians ascribe diseases generally to supernatural influences or gods, but some diseases have their own special gods. The god of small-pox, for example, is *Akhyə Zoshən* (the golden Zoskhan), and also his consort, the goddess *Khanla Shkwəkwa* (Khania the white). How important are the gods of the Abkhasians may be judged from the following circumstance which took place during the spring of 1914 in one of the settlements of the village Jgerdi. Throughout the winter and spring of the year Abkhasia was in the grip of a severe epidemic of small-pox. In order to check the spread of the disease vaccinators were sent to the affected areas. The following account of what happened was described to me by P. Janashia, one of the vaccinators. A certain settlement, fearing that the gods might wreak vengeance upon them, refused to admit the vaccinators; they preferred to safeguard themselves against this terrible disease, *atswarp'shdzə* (small-pox), by the adoption of the gods. *Atswə* denotes skin, rind, and *ap'shdzə*, pretty, beautiful; the whole, in translation, denoting "that which decorates (beautifies) the skin".

By pooling their resources, the settlement raised enough money to buy a couple of snow-white goats and a sufficiency of provisions, and made an expedition into the forest. Here, amidst the quietude and peace of over-hanging leaves, a sumptuous feast was prepared for the divine guests. When everything was ready, and the victim had been placed, according to custom, on *ashwamkyadə'*, the head of the settlement said the prayer and made the offering to the gods. Nearby stood two bedsteads, adorned with silk bedclothes, on which sat two young women, an *amauri* and a peasant woman; their naked breasts were covered with silk handkerchiefs. The whole assembly knelt down, while the head of the settlement implored the gods to accept their offering by kissing the breasts of the most beautiful women of the settlement, and thus become, in accordance with the ancestral custom, adopted sons of the settlement. Near the "foster-mothers of gods" stood two of the finest horses, one with a side saddle. The sumptuous feast followed the ceremony of adoption, and afterwards the people, holding the horses by the bridle, on which were to be riding the newly adopted gods, *Akhyə Zoshən* and *Khanla Shkwəkwa*, escorted the precious guests to the accompaniment of song, far away from the settlement. Thus they "turned away", or warded off, the small-pox.

"You may not believe it," an Abkhaz from the settlement told me, "but this 'adoption' saved us from the small-pox; not one of us fell a victim to it. You, the learned, have caused our ruin by bringing down upon us the anger of the gods of our fathers," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

/34 cont./

775 were wandering about hungry, feeding only upon the charity of the
769 hundred men. Having seen Sesrkva the hero in such a state, his friend asked him, Sesrkva! You surpassed everyone in the wide world. What has befallen you in the life beyond the grave that you are unable to receive even one guest? Sesrkva answered, How then can I receive guests, when I must beg for myself and my horse? When he awakened, his friend realized that no funeral banquet had been held for Sesrkva, so he immediately arranged a rich funeral-banquet for him. Once more he had a dream: Sesrkva was now in as good a condition as his hundred companions and was able to receive guests."

2. "Two persons were walking along; one of them had a fat goat, skinned and cut up, hidden in a sack. In the evening someone began to pursue them, whistling as he ran. The man with the load said to him, Leave me alone! What do you want of me? Having said this, he went his way, but the ghost followed him. His companion guessed what was the matter and advised the friend to cut off a piece of meat to throw to the ghost. The advice was taken and the piece of meat thrown -- the whistling and the pursuit stopped immediately."

3. "The people of Mokvi every year arranged their funeral banquets for the dead, who were buried in the upper part of the burial-ground, while the people of Morkvuli did not do this for the dead buried in the lower part of the burial-ground. Therefore the Mokvi dead mocked the Morkvuli dead; 'You who find nothing!' The others responded to this: 'When our kinsmen find something for themselves, we shall get something, too.' The dead gathered together at night and held dances on the aphstsa r kvashartha (place for the dances of the dead). Everybody could see the footprints of the dancing souls."

794 /35/ The souls of the dead as well as those of the living,
795 and in particular those of the witches, are capable from time
754 to time of wandering about with evil intentions, as sucking milk from nipples, drawing out the heart and liver, etc. Even the water element will not accept witches, and they do not drown in water. They have their own chief, Roskipi, who dwells

/35 cont./

upon the summit of the mountain Tabakona. They are divided into groups according to their degree of power: the younger ones usually travel upon mice, frogs, cats, etc., the older ones on foxes, wolves, etc. On Assumption Eve they are all obliged to gather upon the Tabakona for the annual report of their deeds to their sovereign, Roskipi, and to produce material proof of their industrious service -- a heart taken from a man or animal, a liver, eyes, nails, hair, etc. To avoid attack from witches, the Abkhaz take the following measures: during the fast of the Assumption they erect crosses and stick candles in their hair, and on the eve of the Assumption they shoot off rifles, sing, and spend the whole night in vigil. The Abkhaz believes that a witch can simultaneously be at home, among people, and on top of the mountain Tabakona. The Abkhaz explain such a splitting-up of a person by saying that it is not the witch herself that wanders about, but her accessory soul (aphschchda = superfluous soul).

2.

The True God -- Paganism -- The Principal and Secondary Gods of the Abkhaz -- Causes of Polytheism -- "Creators" and "Forgers" -- Fate or Predestination.

To assist the supreme being, endowed with all the qualities with which, according to our understanding, God is endowed, says Mr. A., Abkhaz mythology added a number of other deities, assigning to each his particular designation. These assisting deities, according to their understanding, were created by the Almighty before man and the universe came into being, and people at prayer appeal through them to God himself. God himself never descends to earth, but if he needs to punish someone or to grant someone his grace, he sends out one of his assistants. In the prayers which are said and sung at sacrifices and other

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVihZhq

1796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alòshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warpà* or *a-*
[920] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[184] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[716] In the opinion of the commission, *Alòshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[231] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight." [1]

[807] The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri, vàri, khòzò, jhkwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*wàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khòzò* as whey; *jhkwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

1716 (*d*) *Àmza-nokwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
1796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

[104] * See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the production of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ʒ" (the ancient Arabic *'ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of
[171] Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Arailè* (cf. *Alòshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Arsès*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Àmza, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, guard over our men! Grant them beauty and strength!" Simultaneously the men-folk crowd around him, for the moon is the god of men; the women-folk stand at a distance. "Increase our cattle and all our weal! Burn out the eyes of the spell-binders, and the tongues of the evil-speakers! *Wootsw, Wootsw!*" the supplicant continues his incantation and, calling to the cattle, spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà* or *a-k'worpà*) now in the direction of the sea, now towards the mountains.

"The moon is a man, and the sun is a woman," say the Abkhasians.

I will now quote from my notes the following brief account of a very characteristic Abkhasian tale:

(1) "Seven very rich Abkhasian brothers had no sisters; whereat they were very aggrieved. Eventually, however, a sister was born, but from that moment the wealth of the brothers began to diminish; every night some invisible power drove away their cattle in herds. The youngest brother who was endowed with the gift of prescience (*ashàna*) said to the others: 'A demon has entered our house in the guise of our sister; if we do not kill him, our days and those of all in the whole district are numbered!' The brothers, however, would not listen to him. Thereupon he left his home, and travelled abroad, where he married a beautiful maiden-sun (*Àmra*). After several years, feeling home-sick, he set out to visit his brothers. Alas! what did he find? There was nobody left alive in the whole district except a mouse and his own sister-demon (the witch). She at once devoured his horse, and stepped aside to sharpen her teeth. On the advice of the mouse, the moon-brother, to save his life, took to his heels; he managed to inform his wife-sun of his misfortune, who hastened to deliver him. But the sister overtook her brother and began to devour him. By this time his wife Àmra had arrived. She pulled her husband, *Àmza*, towards her, but the demon pulled also; and so a deadlock ensued. *Antswd* decided the matter thus: he allowed the wife-sun to have her husband, the moon, for fifteen days, and the demon to have him for the remaining fifteen days of the month. And from that time began the phases of the moon. As soon as the moon becomes full it means that the demon has begun to devour Àmza, on which account the moon diminishes gradually; towards the end of Àmza's life his wife, full of love, comes to the rescue of her unfortunate husband, and as her caresses and care restore him to life the moon waxes again. When it is full the demon reappears and the story repeats itself!"

(2) "The Eclipse of the Moon. During the eclipse a monster, Atv (*Atwyo*), falls upon the moon to devour it. In order to save their

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

they, therefore, take precautionary measures to avoid becoming victims of the malignant will of the evil spirits. Nothing is left outside the house, or in the courtyard; nobody sleeps out of doors. To safeguard themselves from evil spirits, the superstitious attach pieces of wax to their hair. Crosses are made from *a-lakwə̀mha* (Geo. *lekumkha*),[1] to which are appended acanthus leaves, and these are placed at the courtyard gates, house doors, the gates of the kitchen gardens and cornfields, the poultry and cow-houses, etc. Acanthus leaves are hung around the necks of the domestic animals. The Abkhaz is convinced that *dwyəst'aă* dare not approach these crosses, which are also a protection against evil eyes.

During this night the evil spirits go out to look for booty, under the leadership of their mother, *Arapàp* (Meg. *rokapi*). On this expedition they are joined by human beings in whom evil spirits have taken their abode. Some of these evil spirits ride wolves or cats, and devour all the animals left outside by their owners who had no time, or had forgotten to drive them into shelter.[2] All evil spirits without exception stir abroad during this night; they wander growling from village to village and through the forests. For this reason it is easy to find out and catch them, and with this object youths go into the woods, where they make a large fire, using the wood of *a-lakwə̀mha*. The youngsters hide behind the bushes and watch out to see if they can recognize those of their neighbours into whom an evil spirit has entered. It is believed that the demons never pass a bonfire without stopping and warming themselves a little by it. Often quarrels arise on this ground, with unpleasant consequences. This custom of seeking after the evil spirits, "demons," is called *Awyəst'aă lə̀khəra*, which denotes "the catching of the demon"; it is also known under the Megrelian name of *dchindchat'oba*. To this day an Abkhaz believes that an evil spirit can enter into, and remain in, a human body, particularly in that of an old woman.

The chief *dwyəst'aă* is the eldest son of the sister of God, and that is why He, being a blood relation, cannot destroy him, although he may frighten him off with thunder. Here it will be appropriate to quote the following popular story:—

"At the time of the partition of the work between God and the devil, the former, exercising the right of seniority,[3] suggested to the devil that they should divide the world between them. The latter

[1] The Russian *krushina*, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, that is, *alaternus* (R. Eristov mentions the plant *lshukha*, but he does not explain it. Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*).

[2] To safeguard an animal from wild beasts when he strays in the forest, they "bind the mouth" of the wild animals as follows: a pair of scissors is tied and a suitable prayer is uttered. "A sure remedy."

[3] The younger divides, and the elder chooses.

/13 cont./

576 enter a house is decided with the same ceremoniousness. Or, for example, when two horsemen meet each other in the forest. If the younger of the two has something to say to the older one, he must dismount and speak while standing on the ground. At that point, the older one urges him to speak without dismounting.

/14/ The language of the Abkhaz also bears witness to their politeness. In conversation they often use such expressions as: "I ask that your sickness will pass on to me," "may I become the victim of your sicknesses," "may I be the victim instead of you," "may I go around the place where you are lying," etc. In keeping with this last expression, an Abkhaz woman, when visiting her sick foster-child or a person she has not seen for a long time, walks three times around him with the words, "utsge mtsuge seizgat," i.e. "may I carry away your sickness, your misfortune."

[608] [155]

For every occasion in life, the Abkhaz has a special greeting, in which are expressed his wishes for prosperity, strength, victory, fertility, profit, etc. In this repertoire of various Abkhaz greetings, there are even some which are especially meant for occasions when one meets persons who are going to a horse-race, greetings for the person who is arranging the races, and so forth. And this is quite understandable and natural for a people such as the Abkhaz, for whom horse and arms constitute the most beloved things, which they have been accustomed to value highly almost from the cradle. The children of members of the upper classes in the very first years of their lives become excellent riders and weapon-bearers. Pistol, dagger, saber, knife, and a whole arsenal of weapons are the constant adornment of every Abkhaz man. For him there is no greater pleasure than to ride armed from head to foot, a burka thrown over him, in the company of his comrades, singing a merry song. Without a horse and arms, life is not worth living to an Abkhaz!

181 [565] [411] [293]

Besides horse-races and trick-riding, the following games are worth noting in the life of the Abkhaz: 1. the ball-game, 2. arkil-riki, and 3. stone-throwing. The folk-music and folk-poetry of the Abkhaz are extremely meager.

526 [541] 538

/37 cont./

777 been born; God save me from such a marriage." And so he
776 planned to kill the newborn baby; when everyone in the
539 house had fallen asleep, he slipped quietly in, carried the child out, ripped open her belly, and threw it upon the flat roof of the hut. Then the two thieves went on their way. The child's wailing awakened the women, who found her, sewed up the wound with silk thread, and thus saved her from death. And no matter how hard the thief about whom the above-mentioned prophecy was made tried to find a wife, he was /38/ unsuccessful. Meanwhile the girl who he thought was dead reached marriageable age and one day somehow met the thief. He immediately fell in love with her and married her. Then it was shown how inevitably every predestination and decision made by the "creator-forgers" is fulfilled.

VII.

Prayers in Honor of the Deities

782 Prayer is the name given to those religious ceremonies and rites accompanied by sacrifices in honor of the gods which are performed according to a definite pattern set and sanctified from olden times.

[776] Each deity may independently show, within his sphere of activity, grace or wrath toward man; for instance, he may send sickness or misfortune on him or his cattle, etc.
[787] The Abkhaz easily determine by special signs whether the
[688] deities' anger is the result of deviations from the fixed pattern of the religious rites. To avert the wrath of the gods caused by omissions in prayers and sacrifices, they must repeat the offerings and complete whatever was omitted the first time; uncorrected omissions and mistakes in ritual weigh heavily as guilt felt toward the angry gods, even upon generations
[755] far removed from the sinners. If anyone falls ill in conse-
[753] quence of neglect in ritual toward one or another god, he must offer him a sacrifice in order to recover. If he is

/38 cont./

782 unable to perform that act because of his sickness, he then
755 presents something as a pledge, saying, "If you (God) are
753 sending this (sickness) because of my guilt, then relieve me; I shall pray to you as is fitting and as the sorcerer will instruct me." But when he does not know which deity is angry and is causing his sickness, he says, "No matter what caused this illness, I shall do whatever the sorcerers may recommend." The pledge is specially set aside as a sacred object until his vow is fulfilled. The performers of prayers during such religious rituals are men or women, depending upon the sex of the deity in whose honor the ceremony is performed.

I shall proceed to a description of the ceremonies themselves.

1.

/39/

782
755

The Ceremony in Honor of Mother Earth

A sinless woman, taking six nuts and a few grains of millet, leads the sick one to an alder tree. Here she carries the three nuts and several grains of millet around the tree in the name of the earth; then she does the same thing around a nut-tree (walnut) in the name of Adabna, begging him to have pity on the sick person. She then makes
[532] a richly-dressed doll in the image of a man, buries it in
[789] the earth for the "liberation" of the sick person, and says, "Play and amuse yourself with this instead of with the sick one." After this, a large millet-loaf is baked -- "the bread of Mother Earth" -- and two other long loaves of bread for Adabna. The same woman takes a piece from each of the four sides of the first loaf, both the loaves in honor of Adabna, a candle, and incense, and with the sick person goes to the crossing of three roads, where she places the pieces of the millet-loaf at one road, the two loaves of Adabna at the second, and at the third she lights the candles and places chevyaki (shoes) there, saying; "Mistress Earth, these are your shoes!" She then places the sick person on his knees

/39 cont./

782 among the articles so laid out, with a "chikila" (a kind of
755 veil) on his head, and begs, "Adgil-ankhu, Atula-ankhuse, grant him your favor! Give him firmess of head, heart, and body! Give him color, skin, and bone! Give him back the will to speak and to work! Give him strength! Deliver him from evil," etc. In the same way she also prays to Adabna. After this, she removes the chikila from the sick person with a nut-twig, raises him, strikes him on the back with a whip, and says, "Go, from this day I grant you freedom (azati)," and then both go home. At home a loaf of millet-bread is broken in two; two women each take a half and stand on the two sides of the hearth opposite each other; the sick person passes three times between them under the loaf, while one of the women exclaims, "Give me the one who has assumed the Hebrew belief," and the other, "Give me the convert to Christianity."

753 The Abkhaz is convinced that the invisible being that
755 settled in the sick man hastens immediately upon leaving him to enter someone else, and so, to help him find a new victim, they pray to him at the crossroads, where there is a continuous /40/ traffic of people, and, subsequently, a victim is always found it is unnecessary to search very long. And since an illness can be caught from a spot where a person accidentally fell or sat down, the rite of appeasing the
[823] earth must be performed on the very same spot of the falling or sitting from which the sickness originated; the doll must be buried on exactly the same spot. This is why, in order not to catch something evil from the spot where he sat down,
[789] the Abkhaz spits three times on getting up and says, "Here stood the house and courtyard of my grandfather!"

2.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Water

782 When someone is ill for a long time with a fever, a
755 female fortune-teller is asked for advice and help; she usually
791

/40 cont./

782 prescribes a prayer to the water, which is thought to be the
755 cause of the illness. Since the protectress of the waters,
[791] the "Mother of Water," is a woman, a sinless old woman is invited to the ceremony.

796 A large, clear, inaccessible fresh-water lake is thought
[798] to be the residence of the "Mother of Water"; she may also dwell in a pure spring, untouched by anything unclean, such as a pig, etc. The "Mother of Water" sometimes comes out of her dwelling to the shore, and at that time anyone may see her. This is how the Abkhaz describe this "Mother of Water." She is a most beautiful, bewitching woman; her locks are incomparable and chestnut in color; her eyes are laughing. The Abkhaz who has been bewitched by her talks
753 to his comrades thus: "Eh, brothers, I have been vanquished
796 by the 'Mother of the Water,' and from now on I no longer
539 belong to your society. Recently I rode into a dense forest and saw a table spread there under a big oak; a mirror and a lighted candle stood nearby; the 'Mother of the Water' was sitting in front of the mirror, smiling at her own beauty and combing her long hair, which reached the ground. My arms fell to my sides from exhaustion; I could not take my eyes from that wonderful vision. When she saw me, she quickly arranged her hair and came towards me. I felt giddy... Without a word she raised all ten fingers, asking me, 'Are you willing to be my husband for ten years or not?' I shook my head, but she would not stop, and with the proper number of fingers raised, she offered me in turn nine, eight, seven years, and so on /41/ of marriage. As I kept on refusing, she finally raised her last little finger and fixed her gaze upon me. I immediately gave my consent..." (1).

1. "Etnograf. pis'ma iz Abkhazii /Ethnographical letters from Abkhazia/," Konst. Machavariani, Droeba, 1884-1885.

755
782 The "pure" old woman who was invited to the ceremony,

/41 cont./

755 782 unnoticed by the occupants of the house of the sick, takes some object belonging to the sick person, e.g., a dress, etc., and goes to the river. Standing on the bank, she says, "Mother of the Water, mistress, if the sick person was bound by you, unbind him"; she then touches the water three times with the object belonging to the sick person and scoops up a few drops of it with alder leaves, which she carefully carries home, where she fastens them to the ceiling above the hearth, convinced that the fever will then disappear like the water in the leaves; then she runs out of the house with the words, "May your sickness also run away like this."

[756] If the sick person feels relief after this, a praying-woman is invited in, a hen and a rooster are prepared with a stuffed loaf of unleavened bread, and three candles are molded, which are distributed in the following manner: the hen and one candle are allotted to the "Mother of the Water," the rooster and the second candle to her husband, and the third candle to their maid-servant, called Abzahav-Abzachav (benefactress). The sick person goes to the water with the praying-woman and kneels down. The praying-woman takes a candle, lights it and places it near the water, and addresses a prayer for the relief of the sick person to the "Mother of the Water" -- dzdzlan dzahvvazh khiphsha gvasha ("Mother of the Water," "mistress of the water," Khiphsha Gvasha); she lights another candle and makes the same request of the "lord husband" of the "Mother of the Water, finally she sets in place the third lighted candle and begs the maid-servant to serve as intercessor and mediator for the afflicted one with her "masters." Then she passes her hand over the sick person's back and gives him "azati" (liberty) from his ailment.

782 585 844 A similar ceremony is performed for the young bride on the occasion when she is for the first time "led out to the water" (i.e., taken to fetch water); it is also performed for a woman in labor so that she may have plentiful milk. In this case, if the ceremony cannot be performed in full, an egg for the "Mother of the Water" is thrown into the water during the prayer.

/41 cont./

515 782 823 [783] Fearing to defile it, the Abkhaz avoids bathing in running water; if he bathes, upon coming out /42/ of the water he takes three stones and says, "I sinned against you today; I went into the water and bathed, but you, forgive me." With this prayer, he passes the pebbles around his head with his hands and throws them into the water.

3.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Rainbow

753 [755] [782] [821] The ceremony in honor of the rainbow, which is not obligatory for all, is performed for the greater part on persons whose sickness, according to the female fortune-teller, is caused by the rainbow. A prolonged yellowness of the face, a weakening of the organism, instability of character -- the Abkhaz attributes all these to the fact that the sick person entered water at the very moment when the rainbow was drinking from it.

755 782 "Sinless" old women, having planned a sacrifice and promised a prayer, lead the sick person out to a brook; they take with them two fried capons, two stuffed loaves of unleavened bread in the shape of a tongue, and other provisions, as in the performance of the ceremony in honor of the water. On both sides of the brook, clean objects are laid out, such as clothes, silver, etc., a little bridge made of thread is thrown over the river from one bank to another. Having prepared all this, the praying-woman, with a doll that has been prepared beforehand in her hands, walks around the sick person, who is kneeling down covered with a piece of calico, and prays for him to the rainbow, known by the name Eliaphshi; then she takes a candle and addresses a similar prayer to the "Mistress Mother of the Water," and her "lord husband." After praying over the provisions she takes some [789] of each dish and throws it into the water; she places the doll in a pumpkin, and, after adorning the latter with lighted

/42 cont./

755 782 [789] candles, she lets it float down the stream, saying, "Amuse yourself with this one, instead of the sick person." Finally the old praying-woman passes her hand over the sick person's back, raises him, and having given him liberty ("azati") from his ailment, she sends him home, instructing him not to look around on his way back. The food brought to the stream is eaten on the spot by the participants in the ceremony; the remains from the table are thrown into the water and the dishes washed clean.

This prayer-ritual is considered the most sacred of all in Abkhazia, and the name of the rainbow, Atsaqva, is pronounced with great reverence. The Abkhaz claims that as [821] a consequence of this ceremony in the rainbow's honor the rain appears.

4.

/43/

782 The Prayer-Ceremony in Honor of the Wind (Phsharnha)

A large loaf of bread with cheese is prepared, placed in a basket, and carried some distance from the house. Here [776] a prayer is said to "Lady Wind" (a deity of female sex), in [824] which she is asked to bring good and to carry off evil and to [777] deliver them from all sorts of misfortunes, etc. Then the middle part of the loaf is cut out, carried into the forest, and hung on an oak tree near the top. The next day, the one who first comes near the oak tree feasts on this offering.

5.

A Prayer in Honor of a Tree

782 824 On Assumption Day, vitushki are baked according to the number of men in the family; then the master of the house, with his household, approaches any kind of young tree and, putting his foot on it, prays, "Tree, give me your blessing and happiness ... that I may safely come down

/43 cont./

782 824 from the treetop. May the fresh twig, when I step on it with my foot, first grow stronger and then, being strengthened, grow fresh (soft), etc."

6.

782 755 A Prayer in Honor of Adnqa or (the same thing) "the Outer Ones"

[775] [753] The souls of the dead, the "outer ones," are often the cause of sickness in man and his cattle. They often become angry, and the outward signs of such anger are frequent yawning, sleepiness, and general exhaustion visited upon the culprit. If the one afflicted does not satisfy the angered "outer ones" with offerings and prayers, an inevitable death awaits him. On one of the Saturdays a meal is prepared of young rams' meat, chicken, sour milk, and the meat of a cow, if the soul of a woman is angered, and all these provisions are laid out on a tablecloth under the eaves, on both sides of which are placed a dress and valuable /44/ objects.

The sick man or woman is placed in the middle of a circle and either a man or a woman, according to the sex of the sick person, prays and begs the living and the dead (Angi-phsngis) to have mercy upon the sick and to grant him health and to accept the food prepared for them. The person pronouncing the prayer for the sick one then passes his hand over the back of the sick person and gives him freedom from his sickness ("azati"). If the ailment is thought to be caused by the soul of a prince or of some other personage of [825] high rank, a tethered horse is untied and released in a field at the concluding words of the prayer: "This (horse) is for your soul." According to Abkhaz belief, such a horse soon swells up and dies.

/48 cont./

753 "hung on the girls' ears." Rheumatic pains in the knees, instability of character, general weakness of the organism of a person, etc. -- all these are consequences of a 789 "weighty cause." To avert the sickness, a button is fastened to the ear like an earring. An innocent and sinless woman 755 leads the ailing person to a nut-bush and makes him kneel; 782 she drives seven /49/ sticks of nut-wood into the ground around him, fastens a lighted candle to each of them, and prays [776] on behalf of the sick person to hanipha, the genius, walking along the rocks.

18.

Prayer in Honor of the Supreme Being

776 753 This supreme being is believed to be the cause of all kinds of sickness in man. When the body-temperature of a seriously sick person fluctuates greatly and he is alternately thrown into a fever and chills, when he faints or loses consciousness and regains it momentarily, and then begins to toss and become delirious, to sing songs, to mumble prayers, etc., the Abkhaz believe that all these severe pathological conditions are unmistakable signs of action by a superior force, by the supreme deities (Antsa r mzz) on the sick person -- "there is a divine cause." The Abkhaz are convinced that this "divine cause" has taken up its abode in the sick person and therefore they say, Antsa drthoup, i.e., "a god 755 came to visit." When the female fortune-teller confirms [787] that the cause of the sickness is indeed that "a god took up his abode" in the sick person, then everyone in the house must assume a gay appearance and rejoice instead of grieving, for "where the god has taken up his abode, there can be nothing but rejoicing." Therefore the village youth gathers in the house of such a patient and all begin to sing and dance, and even the sick person is made to take part in the dances and singing, if he is strong enough to do so.

[782] The prayer-sacrifice is carried out near the house on the edge of a forest. The offering is a goat or a kid, a

/49 cont./

755 782 ram or a lamb, together with loaves of bread, etc. All this is taken to the place selected, and the patient himself is led there. No women are present, for they are not [562] allowed to approach this sacred place. A venerable man, holding a candle, declares, "Great god, as is proper and as the fortune-teller has prescribed, the worshiper today stands before you; he has brought sacrificial animals and loaves of bread ... Have mercy upon him, be merciful to him, if he has sinned before you, forgive him. I beg you to let him go from this day forward, to leave him and free him like a loosened knot." While saying these words, the venerable man moves the candle around the patient, lights it, and places it nearby. He then /50/ takes another candle [776] and prays to Michael-Gabriel. Upon the completion of this ceremony, the sick person returns home alone, while the others sit down to a meal.

One such ceremony, however, is not considered sufficient for the send-off of so eminent a guest as a god. The [796] Abkhaz is therefore obliged to repeat the ceremony annually. One day a week is set aside as a holiday in honor of that same supreme being; this day is considered such a sacred one that the house even remains unswept, etc.

19.

Aphi

776 [821] Aphi (2) is the god and master of the thunder, lightning,

[113] 2. See Sborn. sveden. o kavk. gortsakh, No. V, Tiflis, 1871, pp. 15-16, article "Religioznyye verovaniye abkhaztsev /Religious beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A. -- where, by the way, this deity is called Afy.

[782] and all atmospheric phenomena in general. The most solemn prayers in Abkhazia are offered in honor of this god.

/54 cont./

796 falsely the name of Aphi, who commands the thunderstorms, cannot be punished by means of firearms or side arms, which make up the specialty of Shasha, etc.

782 326 Oaths to Shasha are of two kinds: in the smithy and under the open sky. In the first instance, the smith, having placed the hammer on the anvil and crossed his hands on his breast, stands to one side of it, the one swearing the oath on the other side of the anvil, opposite the smith, and the one concerning whose affairs the oath is being sworn stands to the side. The one swearing the oath, having taken the hammer into his hands, says: "If I am guilty of that of which they accuse me, then may Shasha smash open my head on the anvil"; upon these words, he hits the anvil three times with the hammer, and the oath is considered sworn. In the second 782 instance, two sticks are driven into the ground, one opposite the other; on them are hung loaded rifles whose muzzles are trained on the space occupied by the one swearing the oath; those present stand to the side. The one swearing the oath pronounces, "If I said a lie, may Shasha shoot bullets through my head /55/ from these rifles," and he walks through the space between the rifles three times.

• 755 782 326 [787] At the first sign of sickness accompanied by headaches, the person who has taken a false oath asks his relatives to find out from a female fortune-teller the cause of his ailment. The fortune-teller, who has usually heard beforehand, from the blacksmith himself about everyone who has taken an oath, throws some beans and looks at the stars, and then indicates the cause of the sickness: a false oath sworn to Shasha on such and such a day, in connection with such and such a matter, and in such and such a smithy. One of the ailing person's relatives goes to the person concerning whose affairs the false oath was sworn and by gifts induces him to pray to Shasha to forgive the patient, promising, of course, that upon recovery the patient will give him complete satisfaction. Then they both go to the smithy where the oath was taken, and the

/55 cont./

755 782 326 sick man's accuser, taking off his belt to bear witness to the sincerity of his address to Shasha, approaches the anvil and utters a prayer in which he requests Shasha to deliver the guilty one from his ailment, with a pledge that after his recovery the sick man will come himself to beg for forgiveness from Shasha; then, leaving a piece of iron in the smithy, he goes to set the patient's mind at reast. If the sick man recovers, he satisfies the injured one and goes with him to the smithy, and, having put a small silver coin (no less than two rubles) on the anvil, thanks Shasha for his recovery; the ram, the bread, and the wine that he has brought with him are given to the blacksmith, from whom, after the prayer, he receives pieces of the ram's liver and heart; he sends these to his family as a token of Shasha's forgiveness. In company with his relatives, the injured party, and the blacksmith, he himself eats the food that was brought along in the blacksmith's house.

21.

The Prayer to Eyrig-aatsnykh

679 782 [776] [798] Eyrig-aatsnykh is the patron of stealing, plundering, and robbery. Beyond the river Bzyb this deity is called Chugurukhnykh; all the Abkhaz setting out to steal among the Ubykh, Shapsug, and other mountain-dwellers used to bring offerings to Chugurukhnykh, whose altar, if this expression may be used here, /56/ was located on a cliff beyond the fortification of Gagra. Prayers to this god are offered only by those who practice the "arts" of which he is the patron. An offering of four cone-shaped loaves of bread is brought; a prayer is said over them, asking a blessing upon the enterprise and giving a promise to sacrifice something else to the god in case of success. The loaves of bread are taken along on the trip. The thank-offering consists of something of the stolen goods, and if a horse or a head of cattle is taken, the sacrifice consists of a lock of the stolen animal's hair;

[766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

[767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

[770 cont.]

231 (atlar-tšoup'), they lay the animal on a quickly erected, three-
[182] meter-high framework or in a tree. The owner sacrifices an ox and prays to be spared in the future; then they eat the meat of the sacrificial animal, bread, and cheese, drink wine, and feast
766 the entire day. The Abkhaz proceed in the same way for a person struck by lightning, but no one may weep lest the god become angry (see p. 87).

789 During drought one also turns to Ap'i to send rain; an
[182] ox is sacrificed, and at the feast songs of thanks and praise (antšva-ryssva) are sung in alternating chant. In order to evoke rain magic similar to that customarily practiced among the Balkan peoples is used (cf. also p. 64). The girls from the village stricken with drought place a female doll embodying the drought on a donkey and lead it to the river; here they put the doll on a raft made of twigs and straw, ignite it, and allow it to drift. They pull the donkey by force through the water, and if he brays, there will be rain.

● 755 Various gods are called upon in case of illness. Ague,
[153] delirium, and the like accompanying serious illness are attributed to the presence of the supreme god (Antsar mz) in the body of the sufferer. In order to cure him, they sing and dance about him
[182] and even force him to do the same; then they sacrifice bread and a goat or sheep in the vicinity of the house, during which no woman may be present; an old man with a candle circles the sick person and pleads with the god to forgive him and deliver him. He also prays afterwards to Michael-Gabriel.

In case of fever they look for help from the "Mother of
[176] the Waters"; she lives, according to them, in a clear lake or spring, is beautiful, has brown hair and laughing eyes, and likes to live for a while with a man, like the mermaids. An old woman touches the water with some object belonging to the feverish person and begs the goddess to release him if she has enthralled him. Then she ladles up a few drops of water on some alder-leaves and holds them over the fire in the house so that the fever may leave as quickly as the water on the leaves. Finally the old woman moves away quickly, with the wish that the fever, too,

[770 cont.]

●755 might leave. As soon as the afflicted person is able, he himself goes to the water with a prayer-woman; there he kneels and
[782] offers up a hen to the mother of the waters, a rooster to her husband, and a candle to each of them and to her female servant (Abza'avabzatšav = benefactress, intercessor). The woman prays and strokes the sick person on the back for "deliverance" (azati).

If someone suffers from jaundice or debility, [771] the "irreproachable" elders lead him to the river, lay his clothing, silver articles, etc. on both banks, and make a bridge of twisted yarn over the river; the prayer-woman then circles the sick person with a doll and prays to the rainbow in the name of the Eliap'ši, to the mother of the waters, and to her husband. She
[782] casts into the water pieces of the food that was brought along: roasted chickens, tongue-shaped flat cakes, etc., and she allows the doll to float downstream in a gourd with a burning candle, while she prays that the goddess amuse herself with it rather than with the sick person. Finally she gives the latter "deliverance," and he may not look back on the way home (cf. p. 924 f. [untranslated]).

231 789 When rinderpest struck, the Kemirkehe used to dig a tunnel in a steep river-bank and in the middle of this a pit in which they fastened a black cat with a silver belt. They covered the pit with boards and earth, ignited a fire on top by rubbing two sticks together, and drove the cattle through the river and the tunnel, to the accompaniment of the priests' litany. Afterwards the cat was freed.

842 The above-mentioned threefold prayer at the water is aimed at fertility when one "leads to the water" a young woman
849 for the first time, during which an egg is thrown in, and, in the case of a woman in childbed, food for the infant.

787 [821] The Abkhaz read signs for future events, for a favorable or unfavorable outcome for undertakings, from the stars, from the form of the moon, from meeting certain animals or human beings, and also, in the manner of the Tatars, from the cracks in a sheep's shoulder-blade that has been cast into the fire (see Vol. II, p. 325).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àħwsa-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àħwsa-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nəħwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nəħwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nəħwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nəħwa* (*anəħwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateypa, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

who transgress against him. In order to avoid incurring the anger of this god, an Abkhaz will not draw water or wash himself when the rainbow is in the sky, and is generally careful about the use of water. Like any other god, *Atswaqwa* may bestow the " warmth of his eyes and his heart ", in return for offerings and prayers. Whoever is affected by his wrath, grows icteritious, emaciated, to save his life he must, at the direction of the sorceresses, make the following offering to the rainbow god :—

On one of the Thursdays [1] the old (" pure ") women take the sick person to the river, pass (Geo. *shemoavleben*) around his head 4–5 yards of variegated chintz, and pray : " The great god ! Acknowledging his transgressions this sick person (the name is mentioned) has appeared before thee, and humbly entreats thee to accept this chintz as a pledge that he will perform the established offering at the proper time, at the direction of the sorceresses ! "

On the following Thursday he is taken again to the same river and place. Usually three women say the prayer, but there may be seven. Men, with the exception of the patient, are not allowed to be present at this ceremony. The sick person is dressed entirely in white. The eldest woman [2] kills a capon and a hen ; women carry out all the duties, preparing *ashwamkydt'*, " *ghomi* " (millet pudding), *akwakwdr*, and *atcha-gvazdl* (Geo. *ghvezeli*, an oblong bread), of each of which there must be seven of the usual, and seven of the very small size. All these are placed on *ashwamkydt'*, on which also burn seven wax candles. The prayer is said by the eldest woman. The patient kneels in front of the offering ; he is taken home immediately the ceremony is over, and he must not look back. The seven small *akwakwdr*, *atcha-gvazdl*, and seven small portions of *ghomi* (*abdst'a*—millet porridge), are thrown into the water ; they represent the share of the female slaves (*aAt'ap'hwds*) of the rainbow god. Everything else is consumed by the women themselves ; the remains being thrown into the river, for nothing must be taken home.

Muhammadans must also burn candles at this offering. The candles are fixed on a kind of hoop made of grape vine. At the end of the ceremony the hoop with the burning candles is thrown into the river.

It should be noted that in some parts of the country this god is called *Atswaqwa-dlia* (the Rainbow-Eliah). So at least he was called, according to the testimony of D. I. Gulia, by Javaz, the famous woman supplicant.

[1] Thursday in Megrelian is *tsisAAa*, the day of the sky. It is noteworthy that the Abkhasians perform usually on the day of the sky, the majority of rites that are seemingly connected with the sky, as in the case given.

[2] The Abkhasian women kill animals only on occasions of certain offerings.

/41 cont./

755 782 unnoticed by the occupants of the house of the sick, takes some object belonging to the sick person, e.g., a dress, etc., and goes to the river. Standing on the bank, she says, "Mother of the Water, mistress, if the sick person was bound by you, unbind him"; she then touches the water three times with the object belonging to the sick person and scoops up a few drops of it with alder leaves, which she carefully carries home, where she fastens them to the ceiling above the hearth, convinced that the fever will then disappear like the water in the leaves; then she runs out of the house with the words, "May your sickness also run away like this."

● [756] If the sick person feels relief after this, a praying-woman is invited in, a hen and a rooster are prepared with a stuffed loaf of unleavened bread, and three candles are molded, which are distributed in the following manner: the hen and one candle are allotted to the "Mother of the Water," the rooster and the second candle to her husband, and the third candle to their maid-servant, called Abzahav-Abzachav (benefactress). The sick person goes to the water with the praying-woman and kneels down. The praying-woman takes a candle, lights it and places it near the water, and addresses a prayer for the relief of the sick person to the "Mother of the Water" -- dzdzlan dzahvvazh khiphsha gvasha ("Mother of the Water," "mistress of the water," Khiphsha Gvasha); she lights another candle and makes the same request of the "lord husband" of the "Mother of the Water, finally she sets in place the third lighted candle and begs the maid-servant to serve as intercessor and mediator for the afflicted one with her "masters." Then she passes her hand over the sick person's back and gives him "azati" (liberty) from his ailment.

782 585 844 A similar ceremony is performed for the young bride on the occasion when she is for the first time "led out to the water" (i.e., taken to fetch water); it is also performed for a woman in labor so that she may have plentiful milk. In this case, if the ceremony cannot be performed in full, an egg for the "Mother of the Water" is thrown into the water during the prayer.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *The Gathering of Medicinal Herbs*

On Maundy Thursday, young maidens, led by old women, go into a forest early before the dawn, to gather medicinal herbs. They must neither converse nor look back. When they dig out the herb, they throw salt into the soil, murmuring "*Àdgilə-dədop'al, bəkhwə bàM'eyt*, the Queen-Earth, we have returned to thee thy share". The following herbs are considered as particularly healing: (*a*) *ajmshyə-rshwə̀ga*, *Arum albispatum*,[1] literally denoting: *ajmshyə*, eyebrow; *ashwə̀ga*, "that with which they paint (a paint)"; it is used against diphtheria and scarlet fever; (*b*) *aziqyil* or *abgar ləmha*, *Aristolochia pontica*[1] (birthwort); the second Abkhasian term denotes, literally, "jackal's ear," used against erysipelas (St. Anthony's fire); and (*c*) *ajaqwa*, veratrum, according to Tchubinov (Geo. *Kharis-dziva*). Having finished gathering, they return home in silence and without looking back.

Maundy Thursday is called by the Abkhasians *tchatchkhadə̀l*, derived, in all probability, from the Megrelian *tsashkha didi*, "the great Thursday."

5. *Jaja*[2]

On Maundy Thursday the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the goddess of fruitfulness (of husbandry and horticulture) called *Jaja*. For this occasion the Abkhasian women prepare all sorts of lenten dishes, taking care always to include a pumpkin. The dishes are placed outside the house, in a corn-field, the offering to *Jaja* being accompanied by a supplication as follows: "The great *Jaja*! We have done all that was required of us, and have made the customary offering. We therefore humbly entreat thee to show thy bounty towards us and grant us a good harvest in the field and in the kitchen garden!" As I have stated before, the Abkhasians have no set prayer formulas, and each prays as best he can.

As always, the offering is left for a few minutes wherever it was placed, and the supplicants stand before it, and watch with emotion how the spirit of the goddess invisibly satiates herself with the gifts of men! Needless to say they themselves consume the "remains".

As I have already remarked, there are two Abkhasian gods of fruitfulness: the god *Andə̀p'a-nə̀ga* and the goddess *Jaja*.[3] *Jaja*, as imagined by an Abkhaz, is a broad-shouldered woman, of small stature. More than once Abkhasians have seen her wandering about the fields

[1] According to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden.

[2] It is of interest to elucidate what relation *Jaja* holds to Georgian *jojoba*; see I. Javakhishvili, *A History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian), p. 135.

[3] The relation of these two gods is difficult to determine; nor do we know the relation of *Jaja* to *Ayt'ar*.

/26 cont./

602 avoids pronouncing the name of his wife. When the wife's father
[606] and mother first visit their son-in-law, he must offer them presents in the same way as when he himself with his wife first visits the wife's parents.

V.

Mourning and Burial of the Dead

758 In general the Abkhaz are very compassionate towards the
574 sick and never leave alone a person who is seriously ill. When the villagers are informed that one of their number is seriously ill, all of them without fail will visit him, inquire about his illness, encourage him, and try to cheer him. The patient is visited not only by his relatives, but also by all the other villagers, irrespective of their title or means. They usually come to visit the patient in the evening and spend the whole night with him, singing, dancing, or telling stories, making jokes, etc., with the object of somehow /27/ cheering the invalid and relieving his sufferings in one way or another. The sick are treated with home remedies, old wise-women say prayers over them, etc.

763 As soon as a patient dies, the women instantly break out in deafening wails and soul-shaking screams, at the same time tearing out their hair, scratching their bodies, beating themselves on the face and head, and so on. Meanwhile the whole
764 neighborhood gathers, and the weeping and sobbing increase. Some women closely related to the deceased begin to beat themselves, striking their heads against something or other; the others try to soothe and quiet them. But all these admonitions frequently have no effect on the frenzied mourners, who, as a result of the blows they have inflicted upon their own heads and bodies and of beating their heads against something, fall down as if dead. When quiet finally prevails, the funeral ceremony is arranged. The next of kin sew themselves mourning apparel,
[203] and messengers are sent out with notices and invitations to the relatives, foster parents, friends, and acquaintances of the deceased; his fellow villagers on the other hand are obliged

/26 cont./

602 avoids pronouncing the name of his wife. When the wife's father
[606] and mother first visit their son-in-law, he must offer them presents in the same way as when he himself with his wife first visits the wife's parents.

V.

Mourning and Burial of the Dead

758
574 In general the Abkhaz are very compassionate towards the sick and never leave alone a person who is seriously ill. When the villagers are informed that one of their number is seriously ill, all of them without fail will visit him, inquire about his illness, encourage him, and try to cheer him. The patient is visited not only by his relatives, but also by all the other villagers, irrespective of their title or means. They usually come to visit the patient in the evening and spend the whole night with him, singing, dancing, or telling stories, making jokes, etc., with the object of somehow /27/ cheering the invalid and relieving his sufferings in one way or another. The sick are treated with home remedies, old wise-women say prayers over them, etc.

763 As soon as a patient dies, the women instantly break out in deafening wails and soul-shaking screams, at the same time tearing out their hair, scratching their bodies, beating themselves on the face and head, and so on. Meanwhile the whole
764 neighborhood gathers, and the weeping and sobbing increase. Some women closely related to the deceased begin to beat themselves, striking their heads against something or other; the others try to soothe and quiet them. But all these admonitions frequently have no effect on the frenzied mourners, who, as a result of the blows they have inflicted upon their own heads and bodies and of beating their heads against something, fall down as if dead. When quiet finally prevails, the funeral ceremony is arranged. The next of kin sew themselves mourning apparel,
[203] and messengers are sent out with notices and invitations to the relatives, foster parents, friends, and acquaintances of the deceased; his fellow villagers on the other hand are obliged

/21 cont./

565 608 This, however, does not exhaust the role of the ward with regard to his foster parent. He is the main character in the joys and sorrows of his foster parent; in all the occasions of his life that have any importance. Thus, when his foster mother, or her [765] husband, or one of their children dies, he bewails them bitterly, dresses in mourning, lets his hair grow, buys the coffin at his own [764] expense, and takes care of the arrangements and the ceremonial for the mourning and the funeral of the deceased. When the funeral banquet is given, he provides a sheep or a horse and again arranges everything. The ward also is the main character [583] when the son of his foster mother abducts a girl to be his wife; if the relatives of the girl pursue the abductor, the princely ward comes to his aid with words and weapons and does not give up the abducted girl; subsequently he keeps her at his house until the matter is definitely settled, for none of the relatives of the abducted girl would dare to attack his home.

If, on the other hand, the marriage of the son or daughter [584] of the foster father is arranged peacefully by the voluntary consent of both sides, then here, too, the princely ward is considered the bridegroom's best man and presents the bride with money, a horse, etc.

The foster parents in turn do not fail to perform their duties with regard to their ward, whom they call their sun, their /22/ sacredness, and by whose name they swear. Every year at [431] Christmastide they give him presents, such as cheese, capons, and bread; at Easter, a lamb or a kid and "chumukhkvati." These presents are the obligatory outward signs of sincere liking and friendship on the part of lesser ones ("lower brotherhood") towards those of higher rank; with their cessation the mutual friendship is also broken off.

The sons of the foster mother are usually the bosom friends [579] and accomplices of the ward in his nocturnal thieving adventures. That is why a prince or nobleman always takes the sons of his foster mother with him on his thieving expeditions; he knows that

/22 cont./

565 608 [579] they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for him if necessary. When a ward dies, the grief and sorrow of the foster parents are unbounded; for his funeral they furnish a shroud and money; [964] [965] they also bring one or two bulls, sheep, etc. for the funeral repast for the deceased. When their ward marries, they give him all kinds of assistance through their personal labor. They [585] also present him with fattened animals and bring presents to his bride as well.

608 565 796 Among the Abkhaz another type of wardship also exists, namely, that of an adult man being invited to assume the role of ward. The Abkhaz peasant invites such a man with the words, "I wish to take you into my house and honor you according to my means." On the appointed day, the person invited goes to the house of his future foster father and takes along a few additional people. During the supper the host and his relatives kneel down in front of their ward-to-be and give him a glass of wine; they then stand and one of them addresses to him the following speech: "From this day on we regard you as having been nursed in our family; we are of the same spirit as you and will begrudge you nothing; we hope that you, too, will begrudge us nothing; you will be held in higher esteem than the other wards." After this they present him with a few rubles and give something to his companions (khadzh /see foreign text/). While handing over the presents, they say, "Vadcha enup" (a present for you). This ceremony ends in the following way: on a carpet, spread on the floor, a chest is placed, on which the wife of the host of the house, i.e., the future foster mother, seats herself; the other women surround her. Then the ward-to-be enters through the open door, stands in front of the hostess seated on the chest, greets her, /23/ and thrice touches with his lips the nipple of her breast, or, as the Abkhaz say, "bites her nipples three times"; after each time he repeats, "from this day on you are my own mother." And indeed, from 608 565 this time on exactly the same mutual relations obtain between them as in the first case where another's child is fully reared. It need hardly be said that, besides the princes and nobles, the

/26 cont./

602 [606] avoids pronouncing the name of his wife. When the wife's father and mother first visit their son-in-law, he must offer them presents in the same way as when he himself with his wife first visits the wife's parents.

V.

Mourning and Burial of the Dead

758 574 In general the Abkhaz are very compassionate towards the sick and never leave alone a person who is seriously ill. When the villagers are informed that one of their number is seriously ill, all of them without fail will visit him, inquire about his illness, encourage him, and try to cheer him. The patient is visited not only by his relatives, but also by all the other villagers, irrespective of their title or means. They usually come to visit the patient in the evening and spend the whole night with him, singing, dancing, or telling stories, making jokes, etc., with the object of somehow /27/ cheering the invalid and relieving his sufferings in one way or another. The sick are treated with home remedies, old wise-women say prayers over them, etc.

763 As soon as a patient dies, the women instantly break out in deafening wails and soul-shaking screams, at the same time tearing out their hair, scratching their bodies, beating themselves on the face and head, and so on. Meanwhile the whole

• 764 neighborhood gathers, and the weeping and sobbing increase. Some women closely related to the deceased begin to beat themselves, striking their heads against something or other; the others try to soothe and quiet them. But all these admonitions frequently have no effect on the frenzied mourners, who, as a result of the blows they have inflicted upon their own heads and bodies and of beating their heads against something, fall down as if dead. When quiet finally prevails, the funeral ceremony is arranged. The next of kin sew themselves mourning apparel,

[203] and messengers are sent out with notices and invitations to the relatives, foster parents, friends, and acquaintances of the deceased; his fellow villagers on the other hand are obliged

/27 cont./

764 [203] to come to the mourning ceremony without being invited. The deceased is put in a coffin. The women in mourning apparel, barefooted, their dresses torn, bloody scratches on their faces, and their hair loose, arrange themselves behind the coffin. From the other side the male and female mourners approach the coffin. The arrangement of the lamentations is as follows. Let us suppose that four or five women are coming to bewail the deceased. As soon as they enter the yard, they immediately start weeping and shouting "avav," and at the same time they put their fingers to their temples and continue to scratch their faces with them down to the chin until they have finished their "avav." The women sitting by the coffin answer their "avav" with the same exclamation. The mourners slowly approach the house. Their wails and sobs gradually become louder; finally they enter the house, where the real communal mourning takes place. The mourners enter the house, beating their foreheads and breasts; they kneel down before the coffin and thus bewail the deceased.

In another part of the house the belongings of the deceased are put on display, his clothes and his weapons. After the mourning of the deceased, weeping and sobbing are done over his belongings also.

Sympathy for the relatives of the deceased is expressed by [195] visitors in the following manner: "Had this but not happened to you; had you but heard of my death instead, etc."

764 608 /28/ The foster mother of the deceased or her children, when they come to bewail the ward, break out in wails and cries even a verst from the house. In the yard they are met by people who have been stationed there for this purpose and who lead them by the hand into the house. This does not prevent the new arrivals from scratching their cheeks and necks on the way until they bleed, nor from beating their heads against the house-posts until they fall down before the coffin half-dead and with tears flowing. The foster father and his children likewise beat their heads and faces.

764 [196] On the day of the funeral, lamentation for the deceased is general. Then, after the mourning, a funeral repast is arranged and all the guests are treated to bread, wine, and lenten fare, and by evening the deceased is buried.

/28 cont./

766 It is necessary to point out one more characteristic feature. When the head of a family dies and the sad procession has just started out for the burial-ground with his remains, a rope is thrown over his house; the ends are held by two people who pull it first one way and then the other. The meaning of this curious custom, which is also widespread in Mingrelia, is the following: with the death of the head of a family and the removal of his body to the burial-ground, the house begins to shake and threatens to collapse, and in order to avert this they have recourse to the rope. After the body has been carried out and the house remains undamaged, a rifle is fired as a sign of joy.

764 Graves for men are dug waist-deep, for women still deeper, [562] because in the opinion of certain Abkhaz, women in general are sly and cunning (paivan), and the Abkhaz proverb says, "Don't [539] tell your wife what is on your mind or she will crawl out even from her grave and divulge your secret." Therefore a deceased woman is buried deeper and covered with more earth.

When the deceased has been placed in the grave, it is rimmed with wooden boards and earth is poured in from above.

The Abkhaz do not have special burial-grounds. Each family has its own burial-ground. More often, high and mountainous places near a common road serve as burial-grounds. The tourist or traveler will easily observe that in Abkhazia the best and most poetic spots are occupied by graveyards.

765 The attention paid to the deceased continues long after his burial. The mother and the wife of the departed, his foster mother or her daughters, dressed in mourning and barefoot, visit the fresh grave every day, morning and evening, and bitterly bewail the deceased /29/ and beg him to assist them in various daily troubles, to intercede for them with other deceased persons, to give them their regards, etc. This continues up to 40 days or until the "Saturday mourning banquet." Until this time, the belongings of the deceased are displayed in the house and mourners as they arrive first weep over these belongings and then also over the grave. Likewise until this time, and often for the duration of a full year, a portion for the deceased is placed on

/32 cont./

775 knapsack with great rejoicing to the burial-ground, where,
[766] through a hole drilled in the knapsack, the captured soul passes into the grave of the one who drowned.

769 In Abkhazia the dead are highly honored. The burial-
[764] grounds, as we have said, lie on high, picturesque places and are surrounded by fences. Shingled houses of a kind the Abkhaz do not make for themselves are built over the graves. Near the graves various fruit trees are planted -- apple, pear, peach, quince, etc. On the graves themselves the Abkhaz lay slices of melons, watermelons, cucumbers, etc. All this serves to confirm the belief that beyond the grave the souls of the dead require food, drink, lodging, etc., just like the living.

And in fact the Abkhaz do believe that the dead will enjoy, for example, the piece of melon placed on the grave. Because of this belief, for almost a full year after a death,
[264] a special share of each meal is laid on the table for the deceased, and banquets are held in his memory, etc. Besides this, annual funeral-feasts are held on the eve of the paternal Saturday for those recently deceased, and on the paternal Saturday itself funeral-feasts are held for those deceased longer. At the slaughter
769 of the sacrificial animal, the head of the family says, "If there
782 is a life beyond the grave, here is this (offering) to your soul." Then as food is prepared and placed on the tablecloth, the head of the family stands in front of the tablecloth and again says, "Deceased ones /33/, grant us the blessing of your souls! Do not harm us by death (mortification)! Make us and our cattle increase (multiply)! etc. At the conclusion of this invocation, he makes the sign of the cross in the air over the tablecloth with an iron spit and says, "All this, prepared by the power of fire and water, is sacrificed to your souls, if indeed there be a life beyond the grave." Having said this, the head of the family takes a glass of wine and drinks it; after this he puts pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificed animal into a slice of gomi, pours a little wine over it, and throws it into the yard, saying:
775 "And this is for you, guiding and escorting souls." From this we
769 perceive that in Abkhaz belief the living relatives of the dead

/52 cont./

821 766 "Recently," writes Mr. Giorgidze in the newspaper Iveriia of 1888, "a man was being buried with laments and sobbing. At that moment two bulls grazing nearby were struck by a thunderbolt and immediately the crying and sobbing turned into dancing and singing, "Atlarchouph." The dead bulls were lifted up and placed on a tree, and the deceased was buried in a deathly silence."

The corpse of a person struck by a thunderbolt is placed in a coffin, put on a tower, and left there until nothing but his bones remain; the coffin is then taken down and buried with the normal burial ceremonies and the celebration of the funeral-banquet established by custom.

175 764 [766] [821] It was probably this custom of such placing or suspending of the corpses of those killed by Aphi that led the ancient Greco-Roman writers and the geographer Vakhushti to state that in Abkhazia and Colchis dead men were not buried, but their corpses hung in trees. These are Vakhushti's words: "Though Christians by creed, the Abkhaz do not know their religion and are therefore considered to be idolaters. And indeed, instead of burying their dead, they dress them in their best clothes and weapons, lock them in boxes, and place them in trees." Apollonius Rhodius (250-200 B.C.) wrote of Colchis, "Many grapes and willows grew there, from the tops of which corpses of the dead were suspended by chains. Even now the inhabitants of Colchis consider it a crime to burn corpses of men or even to bury them and cover them with burial mounds; they are put in undressed hides of bulls and suspended from trees far from the city. But the earth as well as the air gets its own, for the corpses of women are buried in it; such is their law" (1). The same thing is

[113] 1. Greko-Rimskiie pisateli o kavkaze /Greco-Roman authors on the Caucasus/, by Gan, p. 49.

attested in Variae Historiae: "The Colchi put their dead in hides, sew them up and hang them on trees" (2). Nymphodorus

/52 cont./

2. Ibid., p. 162.

175 of Syracuse (who lived about the middle of the fourth
●764 century B.C.) said /53/ that "it is not accepted among the Colchians either to bury or to burn the corpses of men. They put these corpses in fresh animal-hides and hang them on trees. They commit to the earth the corpses of women, however, ... They venerate heaven and earth above all" (1).

1. Ibid., p. 208.

20.

Shasha

326
796

Under the name of Shasha the Abkhaz understand the inventor of the craft of the smith. They say of him, "Shasha khe ah-dou," which means, "Shasha, the great lord of trades." Shasha or Shash was the first blacksmith. He picked up the red-hot iron, not with tongs, but with his hands, and he forged it, not on an anvil, but on his knees. He is the inventor not only of the craft of the smith, but the inventor-patron of 363 other crafts as well. The smithy with all its appurtenances is the image of Shasha (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888, No. 186.

[782
796]
[914]

Prayers are offered up to him on New Year's Eve, and the most complete of the ceremonies to him is held by the blacksmiths and the locksmiths.

782
326

On New Year's Eve the master of the house kills either a calf or a ram, and his wife kills a rooster for each member of the family and prepares a pie of wheat-flour and fresh cheese. The livers and hearts of all the slaughtered animals are roasted separately; for this, instead of a spit, a stick from a young nut-tree is used. When the food is ready

[765 cont.]

A E 55 Devlet-khan, Tatema, Kistaman, Tepsike, Gosop'o khuraya (= round prince's-daughter), etc.

A 766 Death. In Abkhazia, when someone has been struck by lightning, he is laid in a coffin, and this is hung on a tree (as in old Lazistan, see above, p. 671 [untranslated], in Siberia, and other places), until the body has completely decayed; then the bones are buried.

C 766 In the sixteenth century the Cherkess used to seat the body of a nobleman, after having removed the entrails, on a tall, wooden bedstead in the field for a week. The two nearest relatives stood nearby, and on the bed was a girl who brushed away the flies with a silk cloth stuck on an arrow, while the first of his wives sat at his head without weeping. Afterwards the body, with clothing and weapons, was laid in a split and hollowed tree trunk, along with part of the gifts, silver vessels, bows, arrows, and the like, which relatives, friends, and serfs had brought, and set on the ground at the burial-place; over it was raised a mound whose height showed how much esteem the deceased had enjoyed. As a sacrifice for the dead, the innocence of a twelve to fourteen-year-old girl was offered, which the youths attempted to take by force as she lay on an ox-skin. After the burial a servant led the dead man's bridled horse to the grave on several days and called him to eat three times.

A E 764 Now deceased persons are laid to rest with the assistance of a Christian or Mohammedan clergyman (mullah). The lamentation for the dead at the coffin and amidst the clothing and weapons of the deceased, the feast for the dead, etc. resemble the customs of the Khevsur (see p. 737 and following [untranslated]); here, however, male mourners, too, kneel at the coffin. While the body is being carried to the grave, a rope is thrown over the roof and pulled back and forth in order to determine whether the house, which has been severely shaken by the departure of the deceased, still stands firm (as in Mingrelia). In earlier times, the Cherkess also threw the right ear of his horse into the grave, after they had first put the reins into the dead man's hands and led the horse around the grave three times (cf. p. 80). The mother, the wife, and the foster

[765 cont.] The mother, the wife, and the foster mother mourn at the grave for forty days in the morning and in the evening, and for the same length of time, or sometimes for a whole year, food for the deceased is put on the table during meals.

[766] The first memorial service takes place on the fortieth day, the second one during the second year, usually in the autumn. On the evening preceding the latter (ap'ṣ-khuvra = assigning to the soul), the clothes, the horse with the saddle, and the weapons of the deceased are laid out, there is mourning in the house and at the grave, and sacrificial animals are slaughtered. A party of village members in mourning clothes and barefoot bring up animals and food; among them a man carries lighted candles on a twig-shaped holder, as do the oxen on their horns. The next day the horse of the dead man is led around in a circle three times in a field, and the relatives follow it, lamenting in mourning clothes; after this, the soul of the dead, which until then had remained invisibly among them for the time being, has finally departed from the earth. After the memorial feast the youths and men hold oratory exercises, shooting matches, and races, as among the Khevsur (see p. 738 [untranslated], and below, p.30).

The burial grounds, which contain the graves for each kin group, usually lie on elevations and are fenced in. Small houses of planks with shingle roofs--in contrast to the usual building style--are erected over the graves, which are themselves lined with boards, and fruit trees are planted nearby.

Among the Abkhaz, too, there is the belief that the souls of the dead have the same needs as the living, and for this reason they build these grave-shelters, lay slices of melon and cucumber on the graves, and for a year after death put food for them on the table during the meals. At the second memorial celebration the father of the house places in the yard a millet-dumpling over which wine has been poured and pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animal. If the souls are neglected, they come to the house at night and whistle, whereupon food and wine is given to them. When the souls, the "outer ones," are angered, they bring about weakness and sickness among animals and men. Then one tries to console

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

belonging to those who have failed to propitiate her, and muttering: "Corncobs (of Indian corn) of a digit size, corncobs of a digit size!" But if the owner of the field succeeds in frightening her and making her say *rəkʲ, dzakʲ, rəkʲ dzakʲ*, "of a cubit size," he will have a magnificent harvest.

On the day of *tchatchkhadʒəl*, after the offering has been made to *Jaja*, the seeds are taken for the first time into the kitchen garden.

6. *Àmshap'*

Easter Day is celebrated with great solemnity by all the Abkhasians. It must be noted that the Abkhasians to-day have no notion whatever of the Christian conception of this day. Even the greeting, "Christ is risen," usual on this day, is wanting in the Abkhasian language. Everyone able to afford it has a new dress made for this day. To emphasize the poverty of a person the Abkhaz says, "Even for *Àmshap'* he could not get himself new clothes." This is almost the only day when an Abkhaz considers it necessary to send to church at least one of the members of his family. And the service in the church begins early enough to enable it to be finished by sunrise. Everyone is in haste to be the first to light a wax candle and to place a painted egg on the graves of their dead. The Muhammadan Abkhasians also follow this custom, although they do not light the candles. It is known that Abkhasians bury their dead near their homes, in the places favoured by the deceased, and the graves, therefore, are scattered about the village. Owing to this custom the whole village is illuminated on this day of *Àmshap'*.

On this day each family must slaughter some animal. And those of the Abkhasians who follow the established custom of Paschal offerings, immolate two or three animals according to what his obligation is, what he "owes"—this word denotes "obliged", "must", "owes".

(*a*) *Anɨswakhwə* (or *Anɨswakhwa*).

This is a compound word, consisting of *Anɨswa*, God, and (*a*)-*khwə*, part, share, and denoting "share of God", "for God", more exactly "to render to God that which is due to Him", briefly "praying to God". On this day most of the Abkhasians reverently offer up their prayers to God; but not all of them. There are families who are "not obliged" to render to God "His share". I have already mentioned that the Abkhasian makes offerings only to those gods under whose power his parents or he himself had come, and thus had become his tributary, so to speak. Very often separate members of a family have, in addition to the general family guardian-gods, their own personal

/21 cont./

565 608 This, however, does not exhaust the role of the ward with regard to his foster parent. He is the main character in the joys and sorrows of his foster parent; in all the occasions of his life that have any importance. Thus, when his foster mother, or her husband, or one of their children dies, he bewails them bitterly, [765] dresses in mourning, lets his hair grow, buys the coffin at his own [764] expense, and takes care of the arrangements and the ceremonial for the mourning and the funeral of the deceased. When the funeral banquet is given, he provides a sheep or a horse and again arranges everything. The ward also is the main character [583] when the son of his foster mother abducts a girl to be his wife; if the relatives of the girl pursue the abductor, the princely ward comes to his aid with words and weapons and does not give up the abducted girl; subsequently he keeps her at his house until the matter is definitely settled, for none of the relatives of the abducted girl would dare to attack his home.

If, on the other hand, the marriage of the son or daughter [584] of the foster father is arranged peacefully by the voluntary consent of both sides, then here, too, the princely ward is considered the bridegroom's best man and presents the bride with money, a horse, etc.

The foster parents in turn do not fail to perform their duties with regard to their ward, whom they call their sun, their /22/ sacredness, and by whose name they swear. Every year at [431] Christmastide they give him presents, such as cheese, capons, and bread; at Easter, a lamb or a kid and "chumukhkvati." These presents are the obligatory outward signs of sincere liking and friendship on the part of lesser ones ("lower brotherhood") towards those of higher rank; with their cessation the mutual friendship is also broken off.

The sons of the foster mother are usually the bosom friends [579] and accomplices of the ward in his nocturnal thieving adventures. That is why a prince or nobleman always takes the sons of his foster mother with him on his thieving expeditions; he knows that

/22 cont./

565 608 [579] [764] [765] they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for him if necessary. When a ward dies, the grief and sorrow of the foster parents are unbounded; for his funeral they furnish a shroud and money; they also bring one or two bulls, sheep, etc. for the funeral repast for the deceased. When their ward marries, they give him all kinds of assistance through their personal labor. They [585] also present him with fattened animals and bring presents to his bride as well.

608 565 796 Among the Abkhaz another type of wardship also exists, namely, that of an adult man being invited to assume the role of ward. The Abkhaz peasant invites such a man with the words, "I wish to take you into my house and honor you according to my means." On the appointed day, the person invited goes to the house of his future foster father and takes along a few additional people. During the supper the host and his relatives kneel down in front of their ward-to-be and give him a glass of wine; they then stand and one of them addresses to him the following speech: "From this day on we regard you as having been nursed in our family; we are of the same spirit as you and will begrudge you nothing; we hope that you, too, will begrudge us nothing; you will be held in higher esteem than the other wards." After this they present him with a few rubles and give something to his companions (khadzh /see foreign text/). While handing over the presents, they say, "Vadcha enup" (a present for you). This ceremony ends in the following way: on a carpet, spread on the floor, a chest is placed, on which the wife of the host of the house, i.e., the future foster mother, seats herself; the other women surround her. Then the ward-to-be enters through the open door, stands in front of the hostess seated on the chest, greets her, /23/ and thrice touches with his lips the nipple of her breast, or, as the Abkhaz say, "bites her nipples three times"; after each time he repeats, "from this day on you are my own mother." And indeed, from 608 565 this time on exactly the same mutual relations obtain between them as in the first case where another's child is fully reared. It need hardly be said that, besides the princes and nobles, the

/27 cont./

764 [203] to come to the mourning ceremony without being invited. The deceased is put in a coffin. The women in mourning apparel, barefooted, their dresses torn, bloody scratches on their faces, and their hair loose, arrange themselves behind the coffin. From the other side the male and female mourners approach the coffin. The arrangement of the lamentations is as follows. Let us suppose that four or five women are coming to bewail the deceased. As soon as they enter the yard, they immediately start weeping and shouting "avav," and at the same time they put their fingers to their temples and continue to scratch their faces with them down to the chin until they have finished their "avav." The women sitting by the coffin answer their "avav" with the same exclamation. The mourners slowly approach the house. Their wails and sobs gradually become louder; finally they enter the house, where the real communal mourning takes place. The mourners enter the house, beating their foreheads and breasts; they kneel down before the coffin and thus bewail the deceased.

In another part of the house the belongings of the deceased are put on display, his clothes and his weapons. After the mourning of the deceased, weeping and sobbing are done over his belongings also.

Sympathy for the relatives of the deceased is expressed by [195] visitors in the following manner: "Had this but not happened to you; had you but heard of my death instead, etc."

764 608 /28/ The foster mother of the deceased or her children, when they come to bewail the ward, break out in wails and cries even a verst from the house. In the yard they are met by people who have been stationed there for this purpose and who lead them by the hand into the house. This does not prevent the new arrivals from scratching their cheeks and necks on the way until they bleed, nor from beating their heads against the house-posts until they fall down before the coffin half-dead and with tears flowing. The foster father and his children likewise beat their heads and faces.

764 [965] On the day of the funeral, lamentation for the deceased is general. Then, after the mourning, a funeral repast is arranged and all the guests are treated to bread, wine, and lenten fare, and by evening the deceased is buried.

/28 cont./

766 It is necessary to point out one more characteristic feature. When the head of a family dies and the sad procession has just started out for the burial-ground with his remains, a rope is thrown over his house; the ends are held by two people who pull it first one way and then the other. The meaning of this curious custom, which is also widespread in Mingrelia, is the following: with the death of the head of a family and the removal of his body to the burial-ground, the house begins to shake and threatens to collapse, and in order to avert this they have recourse to the rope. After the body has been carried out and the house remains undamaged, a rifle is fired as a sign of joy.

764 [562] Graves for men are dug waist-deep, for women still deeper, because in the opinion of certain Abkhaz, women in general are sly and cunning (paivan), and the Abkhaz proverb says, "Don't [539] tell your wife what is on your mind or she will crawl out even from her grave and divulge your secret." Therefore a deceased woman is buried deeper and covered with more earth.

When the deceased has been placed in the grave, it is rimmed with wooden boards and earth is poured in from above.

The Abkhaz do not have special burial-grounds. Each family has its own burial-ground. More often, high and mountainous places near a common road serve as burial-grounds. The tourist or traveler will easily observe that in Abkhazia the best and most poetic spots are occupied by graveyards.

765 The attention paid to the deceased continues long after his burial. The mother and the wife of the departed, his foster mother or her daughters, dressed in mourning and barefoot, visit the fresh grave every day, morning and evening, and bitterly bewail the deceased /29/ and beg him to assist them in various daily troubles, to intercede for them with other deceased persons, to give them their regards, etc. This continues up to 40 days or until the "Saturday mourning banquet." Until this time, the belongings of the deceased are displayed in the house and mourners as they arrive first weep over these belongings and then also over the grave. Likewise until this time, and often for the duration of a full year, a portion for the deceased is placed on

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [795] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes marula (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pistol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both [302] sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [262] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few

/29 cont./

765 [262] rams, and, in general, whatever they can afford; furthermore they bring various sweetmeats prepared with butter and with honey, and also matsoni (sour /30/ milk), etc. One person in the procession holds in his hand a branching, tree-like candle, to which is fastened a strip of calico, green in color and soaked in wax. At the ends of the larger and smaller branches similar strips are hung, which are stirred by the wind like the leaves of a tree. (If the procession takes place at night, a few lighted candles are fastened to the branching candle as well as to the horns of bulls). Slowly the sad procession approaches the house and enters the yard, where it is met by the others. Here there is wailing and lamentation by the men and women separately. [182] After this the bulls and rams are killed, each with the words, "It is offered to your soul."

The next day, i.e., on the day of the aphskhuvra, a great number of people gather. By noon one of the relatives of the deceased unties his horse and stands in the middle of a meadow, while the men and women form a circle around him. Then the horse is led around the circle three times, with the deceased's next of kin following behind, barefoot, bare-headed, in mourning attire, and weeping bitterly. The men beat their breasts and faces. The women stand in a circle divided into two groups alternately crying "avav." This ceremony ends with the horse being led out of the circle. From this time on, all earthly signs (remains) of the deceased are considered to have been destroyed; up to this time the deceased has been considered to be invisibly present in the gathering.

After this the guests seat themselves at a dinner. On the meadow, under the open sky, a long tablecloth has been spread out for them and various dishes have been prepared. Particularly [262] noteworthy are spoons, cups, glasses, thimbles, etc. made out of cheese. The candles described above are placed there, too.

It must be noted that even though this banquet involves great expense, it is not burdensome to the hosts, since the expenses are shared, not only by the relatives, but also by the whole village where such a funeral repast is held.

/30 cont./

765 526 After the meal, the dzhiriti takes place, reminiscent of the tournaments of the Middle Ages. Now the fair sex occupies the passageway near the house. Young men on horseback assemble in front of the beauties and vie with each other in attempts to display their wit, inventiveness, and knowledge in speeches, and their bravery in the dzhigitovka /trick-riding/ which will follow.

The main dzhigitovka, tarchei /see foreign text/, consists of the following. One of the competing riders accepts from the host of the feast /31/ or from one of the beauties some strips of chintz, a small sewn boot, a rosary of chestnuts, or something else, and, holding this tarchei in his hand, he gallops ahead with it while the other lads pursue him and try to catch him and take away the tarchei. If someone is successful in this, the tarchei passes into the hands of the one who has taken it away from the first rider; then that one races off, and the others again chase after him. The one who escapes capture and manages to bring the tarchei back to the place where the competition started is the winner. The horsemen's competition does not end with this, however; they continue to prance around on horseback, pick up money from the ground at full gallop, etc.

765 541 Sometimes there are also horse-races at the mourning banquet. Children of eight to nine years of age are horsemen. A goal is pointed out to the competitors, and the first one to reach it wins something. In this case, the hosts present the winners with the horse of the deceased, with some animal, or with a khak (arshin or span) of chintz.

VI.

Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz

771 "Up to the year 1867," wrote Mr. A. in his excellent article on the Abkhaz, "the religious situation among the Abkhaz was absurd in the extreme. One found there the rites of all religious doctrines, from fetishism to Christianity. These people had no precise conception of any religion, but adopted from all of them

[765 cont.] The mother, the wife, and the foster mother mourn at the grave for forty days in the morning and in the evening, and for the same length of time, or sometimes for a whole year, food for the deceased is put on the table during meals.

[766] The first memorial service takes place on the fortieth day, the second one during the second year, usually in the autumn. On the evening preceding the latter (ap's-khuvra = assigning to the soul), the clothes, the horse with the saddle, and the weapons of the deceased are laid out, there is mourning in the house and at the grave, and sacrificial animals are slaughtered. A party of village members in mourning clothes and barefoot bring up animals and food; among them a man carries lighted candles on a twig-shaped holder, as do the oxen on their horns. The next day the horse of the dead man is led around in a circle three times in a field, and the relatives follow it, lamenting in mourning clothes; after this, the soul of the dead, which until then had remained invisibly among them for the time being, has finally departed from the earth. After the memorial feast the youths and men hold oratory exercises, shooting matches, and races, as among the Khevsur (see p. 738 [untranslated], and below, p.30).

The burial grounds, which contain the graves for each kin group, usually lie on elevations and are fenced in. Small houses of planks with shingle roofs--in contrast to the usual building style--are erected over the graves, which are themselves lined with boards, and fruit trees are planted nearby.

Among the Abkhaz, too, there is the belief that the souls of the dead have the same needs as the living, and for this reason they build these grave-shelters, lay slices of melon and cucumber on the graves, and for a year after death put food for them on the table during the meals. At the second memorial celebration the father of the house places in the yard a millet-dumpling over which wine has been poured and pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animal. If the souls are neglected, they come to the house at night and whistle, whereupon food and wine is given to them. When the souls, the "outer ones," are angered, they bring about weakness and sickness among animals and men. Then one tries to console

766

766 DEVIANT MORTUARY PRACTICES--abbreviated and extended funerals; distinctive mortuary rites in special cases of death (e.g., for an enemy, stranger, executed criminal, pauper, slave, child, woman dying in childbirth, chief, shaman, warrior, person dying abroad, victim of accidental death, suicide, homicide, victim of epidemic or loathsome disease); ceremonies at the death of animals; etc. See also:

Disposition of war casualties 727
Notions about loathsome diseases 753
Human sacrifice 782
Disposition of miscarriages and stillbirths . . 845
Disposition of victims of infanticide 847

/28 cont./

766 It is necessary to point out one more characteristic feature. When the head of a family dies and the sad procession has just started out for the burial-ground with his remains, a rope is thrown over his house; the ends are held by two people who pull it first one way and then the other. The meaning of this curious custom, which is also widespread in Mingrelia, is the following: with the death of the head of a family and the removal of his body to the burial-ground, the house begins to shake and threatens to collapse, and in order to avert this they have recourse to the rope. After the body has been carried out and the house remains undamaged, a rifle is fired as a sign of joy.

764 [562] Graves for men are dug waist-deep, for women still deeper, because in the opinion of certain Abkhaz, women in general are sly and cunning (paivan), and the Abkhaz proverb says, "Don't [539] tell your wife what is on your mind or she will crawl out even from her grave and divulge your secret." Therefore a deceased woman is buried deeper and covered with more earth.

When the deceased has been placed in the grave, it is rimmed with wooden boards and earth is poured in from above.

The Abkhaz do not have special burial-grounds. Each family has its own burial-ground. More often, high and mountainous places near a common road serve as burial-grounds. The tourist or traveler will easily observe that in Abkhazia the best and most poetic spots are occupied by graveyards.

765 The attention paid to the deceased continues long after his burial. The mother and the wife of the departed, his foster mother or her daughters, dressed in mourning and barefoot, visit the fresh grave every day, morning and evening, and bitterly bewail the deceased /29/ and beg him to assist them in various daily troubles, to intercede for them with other deceased persons, to give them their regards, etc. This continues up to 40 days or until the "Saturday mourning banquet." Until this time, the belongings of the deceased are displayed in the house and mourners as they arrive first weep over these belongings and then also over the grave. Likewise until this time, and often for the duration of a full year, a portion for the deceased is placed on

/31 cont./

771 whatever stood out most sharply and acted most strongly upon their almost childish imagination" (1). Madame Giorgidze says: "At

1. See Sborn. sved. o kavk. gorts., No. V.

present the majority of the Abkhaz profess the Christian religion, the minority Mohammedan. In spite of this, the Abkhaz is little informed in either of the two religions and is really a heathen rather than Christian or Moslem" (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888.

1.

775 766 The Souls of the Dead -- Their Wanderings on Earth

The Abkhaz believes that human life does not end with earthly existence, but that it continues after death, /32/ or, in the words of the Abkhaz, "on the other side." He believes, in addition, that this life beyond the grave continues at the very place where the deceased is buried. It is not enough, therefore, to take a drowned body out of the river to bury it, for the soul of the deceased must also be evoked from the water and brought into the grave in which the body of the drowned man is buried. This is the ceremony of the evocation and capture of a drowned person's soul. Men and women gather on both sides of the river from which the corpse of the drowned man has been recovered. Across the river, from one bank to the other, a silk thread is stretched, from which a leather knapsack is hung, its lower end almost touching the water. The men and women then begin to the sound of the balalaika. The Abkhaz is convinced that the soul of the dead leaves the water and enters the knapsack when it hears the sounds of the balalaika and the singing. When the Abkhaz think that the soul has entered the bag, one of the men jumps into the water and ties it up. They then carry the

[534] [533]

/32 cont./

775 knapsack with great rejoicing to the burial-ground, where,
[766] through a hole drilled in the knapsack, the captured soul passes into the grave of the one who drowned.

769 In Abkhazia the dead are highly honored. The burial-
[764] grounds, as we have said, lie on high, picturesque places and are surrounded by fences. Shingled houses of a kind the Abkhaz do not make for themselves are built over the graves. Near the graves various fruit trees are planted -- apple, pear, peach, quince, etc. On the graves themselves the Abkhaz lay slices of melons, watermelons, cucumbers, etc. All this serves to confirm the belief that beyond the grave the souls of the dead require food, drink, lodging, etc., just like the living.

And in fact the Abkhaz do believe that the dead will enjoy, for example, the piece of melon placed on the grave. Because of this belief, for almost a full year after a death,
[264] a special share of each meal is laid on the table for the deceased, and banquets are held in his memory, etc. Besides this, annual funeral-feasts are held on the eve of the paternal Saturday for those recently deceased, and on the paternal Saturday itself funeral-feasts are held for those deceased longer. At the slaughter
769 of the sacrificial animal, the head of the family says, "If there
782 is a life beyond the grave, here is this (offering) to your soul." Then as food is prepared and placed on the tablecloth, the head of the family stands in front of the tablecloth and again says, "Deceased ones /33/, grant us the blessing of your souls! Do not harm us by death (mortification)! Make us and our cattle increase (multiply)! etc. At the conclusion of this invocation, he makes the sign of the cross in the air over the tablecloth with an iron spit and says, "All this, prepared by the power of fire and water, is sacrificed to your souls, if indeed there be a life beyond the grave." Having said this, the head of the family takes a glass of wine and drinks it; after this he puts pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificed animal into a slice of gomi, pours a little wine over it, and throws it into the yard, saying:
775 "And this is for you, guiding and escorting souls." From this we
769 perceive that in Abkhaz belief the living relatives of the dead

/51 cont./

782 731 574 one of those present begins to glorify the god: "Anchva dukhva zlyphkha khkhaura!" "O you who descends from heaven with lightning and ascend to heaven with thunder, who knows the number of the stars in heaven and of the sands at the bottom of the sea ..." etc., and he concludes the poem with the words, "akhdau." All those present, divided into two groups, repeat every line of the hymn in turn, always three times over.

782 821 The killing of one of the herd by lightning unfailingly evokes prayer to Aphi; on the other hand, if he is not appeased by sacrifice, a repetition of his visit must be expected. The owner of the dead animal invites the inhabitants of the village, without distinction as to age or sex. On the spot where the animal was killed, a tower is built about one and a half sagene in height, so that beasts of prey cannot climb it. All those present surround the killed animal, join hands, and dance, half of them singing "Voetla" and the other half answering "Chaupar," and they raise the animal onto the tower, still singing and dancing, and leave it there as a victim for the birds of prey. Then the owner of the animal killed by lightning sacrifices a bull to Aphi, at the same time thanking him for the present visit and begging him nonetheless to spare him future visits. Various dishes are prepared from the meat of the sacrificed animal; bread, cheese, and wine are brought, and those present feast all day long at the expense of the man who suffered the loss. The day the animal was killed by lightning becomes so memorable in the family that has thus been visited by Aphi that neither the head of the family /52/ nor his children will give anyone anything on the anniversary of that day, saying that they expect a visit from Aphi on that day.

[527] [431]

[766] The same ceremony is performed when a person has been struck by lightning. During the dance around the corpse, none of the relatives of the dead man dares to weep; otherwise all the participants will be struck dead by a thunder-bolt.

/52 cont./

821
766 "Recently," writes Mr. Giorgidze in the newspaper Iveriia of 1888, "a man was being buried with laments and sobbing. At that moment two bulls grazing nearby were struck by a thunderbolt and immediately the crying and sobbing turned into dancing and singing, "Atlarchouph." The dead bulls were lifted up and placed on a tree, and the deceased was buried in a deathly silence."

The corpse of a person struck by a thunderbolt is placed in a coffin, put on a tower, and left there until nothing but his bones remain; the coffin is then taken down and buried with the normal burial ceremonies and the celebration of the funeral-banquet established by custom.

775
769
[766]
[821] It was probably this custom of such placing or suspending of the corpses of those killed by Aphi that led the ancient Greco-Roman writers and the geographer Vakhushti to state that in Abkhazia and Colchis dead men were not buried, but their corpses hung in trees. These are Vakhushti's words: "Though Christians by creed, the Abkhaz do not know their religion and are therefore considered to be idolaters. And indeed, instead of burying their dead, they dress them in their best clothes and weapons, lock them in boxes, and place them in trees." Apollonius Rhodius (250-200 B.C.) wrote of Colchis, "Many grapes and willows grew there, from the tops of which corpses of the dead were suspended by chains. Even now the inhabitants of Colchis consider it a crime to burn corpses of men or even to bury them and cover them with burial mounds; they are put in undressed hides of bulls and suspended from trees far from the city. But the earth as well as the air gets its own, for the corpses of women are buried in it; such is their law" (1). The same thing is

[113]

1. Greko-Rimskiie pisateli o kavkaze /Greco-Roman authors on the Caucasus/, by Gaft, pt. 49.

attested in Variae Historiae: "The Colchi put their dead in hides, sew them up and hang them on trees" (2). Nymphodorus

[765 cont.]

A 551 Devlet-khan, Tatema, Kistaman, Tepsike, Gosop'o khuraya (= round prince's-daughter), etc.

A 766 Death. In Abkhazia, when someone has been struck by lightning, he is laid in a coffin, and this is hung on a tree (as in old Lazistan, see above, p. 671 [untranslated], in Siberia, and other places), until the body has completely decayed; then the bones are buried.

C 766 In the sixteenth century the Cherkess used to seat the body of a nobleman, after having removed the entrails, on a tall, wooden bedstead in the field for a week. The two nearest relatives stood nearby, and on the bed was a girl who brushed away the flies with a silk cloth stuck on an arrow, while the first of his wives sat at his head without weeping. Afterwards the body, with clothing and weapons, was laid in a split and hollowed tree trunk, along with part of the gifts, silver vessels, bows, arrows, and the like, which relatives, friends, and serfs had brought, and set on the ground at the burial-place; over it was raised a mound whose height showed how much esteem the deceased had enjoyed. As a sacrifice for the dead, the innocence of a twelve to fourteen-year-old girl was offered, which the youths attempted to take by force as she lay on an ox-skin. After the burial a servant led the dead man's bridled horse to the grave on several days and called him to eat three times.

A C 764 Now deceased persons are laid to rest with the assistance of a Christian or Mohammedan clergyman (mullah). The lamentation for the dead at the coffin and amidst the clothing and weapons of the deceased, the feast for the dead, etc. resemble the customs of the Khevsur (see p. 737 and following [untranslated]); here, however, male mourners, too, kneel at the coffin. While the body is being carried to the grave, a rope is thrown over the roof and pulled back and forth in order to determine whether the house, which has been severely shaken by the departure of the deceased, still stands firm (as in Mingrelia). In earlier times, the Cherkess also threw the right ear of his horse into the grave, after they had first put the reins into the dead man's hands and led the horse around the grave three times (cf. p. 80). The mother, the wife, and the foster

Cherkess RH5

A 775 [755] [766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

A 775 766 When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

A 175 771 [767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

A [778] [788] C 771 A [771] A 772 [771]

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

[770 cont.]

231 (atlar-tšoup'), they lay the animal on a quickly erected, three-
[182] meter-high framework or in a tree. The owner sacrifices an ox and prays to be spared in the future; then they eat the meat of the sacrificial animal, bread, and cheese, drink wine, and feast
• 766 the entire day. The Abkhaz proceed in the same way for a person struck by lightning, but no one may weep lest the god become angry (see p. 87).

789 During drought one also turns to Ap'i to send rain; an
[182] ox is sacrificed, and at the feast songs of thanks and praise (antšva-ryšva) are sung in alternating chant. In order to evoke rain magic similar to that customarily practiced among the Balkan peoples is used (cf. also p. 64). The girls from the village stricken with drought place a female doll embodying the drought on a donkey and lead it to the river; here they put the doll on a raft made of twigs and straw, ignite it, and allow it to drift. They pull the donkey by force through the water, and if he brays, there will be rain.

755 Various gods are called upon in case of illness. Ague,
[153] delirium, and the like accompanying serious illness are attributed to the presence of the supreme god (Antsar mz) in the body of the sufferer. In order to cure him, they sing and dance about him
[182] and even force him to do the same; then they sacrifice bread and a goat or sheep in the vicinity of the house, during which no woman may be present; an old man with a candle circles the sick person and pleads with the god to forgive him and deliver him. He also prays afterwards to Michael-Gabriel.

In case of fever they look for help from the "Mother of
[176] the Waters"; she lives, according to them, in a clear lake or spring, is beautiful, has brown hair and laughing eyes, and likes to live for a while with a man, like the mermaids. An old woman touches the water with some object belonging to the feverish person and begs the goddess to release him if she has enthralled him. Then she ladles up a few drops of water on some alder-leaves and holds them over the fire in the house so that the fever may leave as quickly as the water on the leaves. Finally the old woman moves away quickly, with the wish that the fever, too,

/32 cont./

775 knapsack with great rejoicing to the burial-ground, where,
[766] through a hole drilled in the knapsack, the captured soul passes into the grave of the one who drowned.

• 769 In Abkhazia the dead are highly honored. The burial-
[764] grounds, as we have said, lie on high, picturesque places and are surrounded by fences. Shingled houses of a kind the Abkhaz do not make for themselves are built over the graves. Near the graves various fruit trees are planted -- apple, pear, peach, quince, etc. On the graves themselves the Abkhaz lay slices of melons, watermelons, cucumbers, etc. All this serves to confirm the belief that beyond the grave the souls of the dead require food, drink, lodging, etc., just like the living.

And in fact the Abkhaz do believe that the dead will enjoy, for example, the piece of melon placed on the grave. Because of this belief, for almost a full year after a death,
[264] a special share of each meal is laid on the table for the deceased, and banquets are held in his memory, etc. Besides this, annual funeral-feasts are held on the eve of the paternal Saturday for those recently deceased, and on the paternal Saturday itself funeral-feasts are held for those deceased longer. At the slaughter
769 of the sacrificial animal, the head of the family says, "If there
782 is a life beyond the grave, here is this (offering) to your soul." Then as food is prepared and placed on the tablecloth, the head of the family stands in front of the tablecloth and again says, "Deceased ones /33/, grant us the blessing of your souls! Do not harm us by death (mortification)! Make us and our cattle increase (multiply)! etc. At the conclusion of this invocation, he makes the sign of the cross in the air over the tablecloth with an iron spit and says, "All this, prepared by the power of fire and water, is sacrificed to your souls, if indeed there be a life beyond the grave." Having said this, the head of the family takes a glass of wine and drinks it; after this he puts pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificed animal into a slice of gomi, pours a little wine over it, and throws it into the yard, saying:
775 "And this is for you, guiding and escorting souls." From this we
769 perceive that in Abkhaz belief the living relatives of the dead

/33 cont./

775 769 are visited by the souls of the deceased, together with other souls accompanying them. The Abkhaz believes that the more magnificently they (souls of the deceased)are met and treated, the more satisfied and generous they will be and the more co-operation and patronage they will give the living -- in the opposite situation, they would only harm the living. Those souls satisfied with their reception, upon their return to the souls of other deceased relatives, express their joy and praise the esteem paid them; unsatisfied souls, however, return extremely irritated and, when asked by the other souls about their reception, answer, "What could we have found there, if they themselves turn out to be just such dead ones as we?" The Abkhaz believe that in this case the unsatisfied souls' most terrible anger will fall on several members of the family that has thus failed to receive their relatives' souls in a proper manner.

The Abkhaz believe firmly that the souls of the deceased leave their graves and visit their living kin. They stand near [782] their houses and whistle; they are placated by the pouring of wine or the throwing out of something. These souls of the dead like to leave their graves, particularly at night; they stand near the road and when they see a traveler they run after him in pursuit. Let us hear how the Abkhaz themselves report the significance of funeral banquets:

1. "Sesrkva was a well-known and brave man. During one raid, he lost his hundred companions in a skirmish; they were all killed. Sesrkva slaughtered a large number of bulls and rams and arranged a funeral banquet for his companions. Afterwards he himself was /34/ killed in a skirmish and buried none knew where. A friend of his expressed the wish to find Sesrkva's grave in order to mourn for him. After a lengthy search he at last found it and mourned Sesrkva, and because his village was far away and the hour late, he decided to spend the night right there. Having tied his horse to a tree, he lay down under an oak and soon fell asleep. He then dreamed that Sesrkva's hundred lads were in an excellent position in the other world; they were satisfied with everything, for they treated their guests honorably and fed their horses well. But Sesrkva himself and his horse

/34 cont./

775 were wandering about hungry, feeding only upon the charity of the
769 hundred men. Having seen Sesrkva the hero in such a state, his friend asked him, Sesrkva! You surpassed everyone in the wide world. What has befallen you in the life beyond the grave that you are unable to receive even one guest? Sesrkva answered, How then can I receive guests, when I must beg for myself and my horse? When he awakened, his friend realized that no funeral banquet had been held for Sesrkva, so he immediately arranged a rich funeral-banquet for him. Once more he had a dream: Sesrkva was now in as good a condition as his hundred companions and was able to receive guests."

2. "Two persons were walking along; one of them had a fat goat, skinned and cut up, hidden in a sack. In the evening someone began to pursue them, whistling as he ran. The man with the load said to him, Leave me alone! What do you want of me? Having said this, he went his way, but the ghost followed him. His companion guessed what was the matter and advised the friend to cut off a piece of meat to throw to the ghost. The advice was taken and the piece of meat thrown -- the whistling and the pursuit stopped immediately."

3. "The people of Mokvi every year arranged their funeral banquets for the dead, who were buried in the upper part of the burial-ground, while the people of Morkvuli did not do this for the dead buried in the lower part of the burial-ground. Therefore the Mokvi dead mocked the Morkvuli dead: 'You who find nothing!' The others responded to this: 'When our kinsmen find something for themselves, we shall get something, too.' The dead gathered together at night and held dances on the aphstsa r kvashartha (place for the dances of the dead). Everybody could see the footprints of the dancing souls."

794 /35/ The souls of the dead as well as those of the living,
795 and in particular those of the witches, are capable from time
754 to time of wandering about with evil intentions, as sucking milk from nipples, drawing out the heart and liver, etc. Even the water element will not accept witches, and they do not drown in water. They have their own chief, Roskipi, who dwells

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Georgians. Thus, according to Iv. Gv. Gomelauri, the well-known pedagogue, in K'iziqi (Signakh district, in Kakhet'i) they say: *tchemi dsili ghmert'i*; *sheni dsili ghmert'i*, " my part of God," " thy part of God." A. Dsuladze, who is well acquainted with the life of the Gurian people, told me that similar expressions were also used in Guria.

Further, as the reader will see for himself, the word *an*, " mother " constitutes part of the names of a series of gods, and several of these names are of the feminine gender, as Dcharaia has also justly noticed. In this connection I should like to direct the attention of the reader to the names of two gods, namely, *jabrdn* and *zhwabrdn*.* Each of these words has in our opinion several connotations; *jabrdn* is compounded of several words: *j* is the root from the word *a-j-ma*, a goat; *a-b*, father; *r* the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural; and *an*, mother. Thus *jabrdn* denotes " father and mother of goats ", i.e. " (fore)parents of goats ", or " god of goats ". In the same manner *zhwabrdn* is compounded of *a-zhw*, a cow, and of the components just explained, so that the whole denotes " father and mother of cows ", i.e. " (fore)parents of cows ".[1] It seems to me that at the dawning of their religio-philosophical life, the Abkhasians evidently worshipped equally both their male and female ancestors. How strong is this ancestor-worship among the Abkhasians even to-day will be shown in my work *The Ancestor Cult*.

Thus, as is the case of Dcharaia, I think that the word *antswd* is derived from the word *an* in the plural. I also think that the name *antswd*, of the Supreme Being, arose from the deification of ancestors. At first it was evidently used with the plural termination, and in the feminine gender, and later, in the course of time, from " many mothers-gods " arose the One God *antswd*.[2] The changing of the gender of gods is often observed in the religions of the primitive peoples, and *antswd* therefore constitutes no exception.[3]

Antswd is One, but He is plural as to His parts. All the gods, of which we will speak below, are subject to and obey Him as the Supreme Being. In the tales, I was told, it is said that *antswd's* mother came from a Megrelian princely *gvari* of Mkheidze, the Abkhasian form of

* The combination *zhw* is to be uttered with one breath impulse; it represents a labialised variety of "*zh*" (= French "*j*"). Cf. "*tsw*", p. 118, n. *. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Such a morphological interpretation does not appear admissible, as the word *an*, if in this case it denotes " mother ", is never combined with *ab*, father, but governs the first part of the compound word, *jab* and *zhab*, which, judging from the relative infix *r*, is assumed to be plural. [Note by the Editor, *Khr. V.*]

[2] And not *dedsma*, as it should have sounded and does really sound " mothers ". See above, pp. 118–19. [Ed., *Khris. Ves.*]

[3] If this supposition turns out to be justified, and the word *antswd* is not of Sumero-Babylono-Assyrian origin (from *An*, *Awa*), its significance as a term employed in the history of religious beliefs generally will be greatly increased.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

belonging to those who have failed to propitiate her, and muttering: [796] "Corncobs (of Indian corn) of a digit size, corncobs of a digit size!" [241] But if the owner of the field succeeds in frightening her and making her say *rákʲ, dzakʲ, rákʲ dzakʲ*, "of a cubit size," he will have a magnificent harvest.

On the day of *tchatchkhadəl*, after the offering has been made to *Jaja*, the seeds are taken for the first time into the kitchen garden.

6. *Àmshap'*

Easter Day is celebrated with great solemnity by all the [796] Abkhasians. It must be noted that the Abkhasians to-day have no notion whatever of the Christian conception of this day. Even the greeting, "Christ is risen," usual on this day, is wanting in the Abkhasian language. Everyone able to afford it has a new dress made for this day. To emphasize the poverty of a person the Abkhaz says, "Even for *Àmshap'* he could not get himself new clothes." This is almost the only day when an Abkhaz considers it necessary to send to church at least one of the members of his family. And the service in the church begins early enough to enable it to be finished by sun- [782] rise. Everyone is in haste to be the first to light a wax candle and to [769] place a painted egg on the graves of their dead. The Muhammadan Abkhasians also follow this custom, although they do not light the candles. It is known that Abkhasians bury their dead near their [764] homes, in the places favoured by the deceased, and the graves, therefore, are scattered about the village. Owing to this custom the whole village is illuminated on this day of *Àmshap'*.

On this day each family must slaughter some animal. And those [782] of the Abkhasians who follow the established custom of Paschal offerings, immolate two or three animals according to what his obligation is, what he "owes"—this word denotes "obliged", "must", "owes".

(*a*) *Anṭswakhwə* (or *Anṭswakwa*).

This is a compound word, consisting of *Anṭswə*, God, and (*a*)-*khwə*, part, share, and denoting "share of God", "for God", more exactly "to render to God that which is due to Him", briefly "praying to God". On this day most of the Abkhasians reverently offer up their prayers to God; but not all of them. There are families who are "not obliged" to render to God "His share". I have already mentioned [776] that the Abkhasian makes offerings only to those gods under whose power his parents or he himself had come, and thus had become his tributary, so to speak. Very often separate members of a family have, in addition to the general family guardian-gods, their own personal

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

ox of a certain colour. If the miracles you talk so much about are true, it should be an easy matter for St. George to bring my ox into this church to-night; then, certainly, I will gladly embrace your Faith.' The condition was accepted. On the following morning, early, on opening the gates, there was found within the enclosure an ox which the unbeliever recognized as his own. Thus he was convinced of his error, and embraced the Christian Faith."[1]

(c) *Indl-qwàba.*

The *T'avadi*-s Marshania, and all those Abkhasians who descended from the mountains (Dsabalaa, Dalaa, Pskhvu, etc.), offer sacrifices (a ram, without fail) in exactly the same manner to a sanctity, *Indl-qwàba*, instead of to the Ilori "icon". I could obtain no information of any kind about this "icon". Everybody I questioned gave the same answer: *Indl-qwàba* is equal in power to *Dadòrəp'sh* and the Ilori "icon".

These offerings are performed early in the morning, and serve as breakfasts. Every Abkhaz slaughters some animal for the meal (the favourite one is a castrated goat), it is often prepared on the Saturday. They also pay the customary Paschal visits. After the midday sacrificial meal they all go to the public square, where they indulge in games, chiefly football. During Easter week they also organize horse racing, the most popular sport of the Abkhasians.

7. *The Second Day of Easter*

This is a commemoration day. A variety of dishes are prepared, all of which are placed on a table by an open window. The eldest of the family, holding a candle and a glass of wine in his hands, prays to the souls of deceased relatives that they grant his family peace and happiness. Then follows the pouring of wine on the meat and wheat dishes. The whole family stand behind the supplicant. After the prayer each member approaches, places a piece of frankincense on burning embers, and pours wine on the food. Here stands too a smoking pipe. All remain seated in silence, in order that the souls of the deceased ancestors may eat in peace.[2]

The Abkhasian, as has already been stated, have no Paschal greeting such as "Christ is risen". They welcome each other with a kiss, saying: "May God grant us that we meet again next year," to which the other replies: "And for a hundred years."

[1] Quoted from the Russian and Georgian translation of A. Lamberti's *Relatione della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia nella quale si tratta dell'Origine, costumi e Costumi naturali di quei Paesi.* Published in Naples, 1654.

[2] This rite will be described in detail in my work *The Cult of the Ancestors.*

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

796 On this day also they "lay the table", that is, prepare a dinner,
[169] for the souls of the deceased, unless the day happens to be one of abstinence, i.e. Wednesday or Friday. In the latter event the feast takes place on the following day.

(e) *Àdsyla-nɔ̀ħwa*

On the same day of the Assumption is observed *Àdsyla-nɔ̀ħwa* (cf. II (10)). The children are taken to a meadow where they are told to place their right legs against a tree. Each holding an *akwakwdr* in the right hand, they remain meekly in this position until the eldest in the family has addressed the prayer to "the spirit of the tree", entreating "the great part of the deity of the tree" to safeguard them from giddiness, from falling off the tree, and from injuries. The children must eat their *akwakwdr* without removing their legs from the tree.

(f) *Anàna-gùnda* (the goddess of bees)

796 This is both a spring and a summer feast.
231 In the spring, when the bees begin to hive, the eldest ("pure") woman of the family takes some hirse (Geo. *p'etvi*) and an egg, and
[779] enters the apiary, where she passes the offerings three times over the hives, and prays to the goddess of the bees, *Anàna-gùnda*: "Submitting these as a pledge that the established offering will be made at the proper time, I humbly entreat thee, *Anàna-gùnda*, to be the guardian of our bees; safeguard them from all illnesses, multiply them, and grant them a good crop!" Hirse and the egg are hung over the apiary.

In the summer, between the 15th July and the end of August, before the gathering of the first honeycombs, more during August,
[780] on a Thursday or Saturday, the promised offering to the goddess *Anàna-gùnda* is made. A large corncake (*a-mgal*), stuffed with cheese, is baked, and placed on one of the hives; also an egg. The family kneel in front of the offering, and the "pure" woman again invokes the mercy of *Anàna-gùnda* upon the honey bees, and says an improvised prayer. The family repeat a long drawn out *dämen*.

After the ceremony, she divides the corncakes crosswise, into four parts, with two strokes of the knife; and cuts these into smaller pieces. The family sit down there and then and dine. They do not
[621] forget the neighbours, sending a small piece each. The remains are placed in a basket and hung up in the apiary. Everybody passing by is obliged to enter the apiary and bless the honey bees and, scattering about a little hirse, eat a piece of corncake.

[178] In ancient times when the Abkhasians irreproachably observed all the rites, the gods were more merciful to them. Thus, the goddess

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Thus, the goddess
of the bees as a sign of her good disposition towards a given family placed an egg (the egg of *Anàna-gùnda*) in one of the hives. No matter how much honey they took from that hive, there would always be a plentiful supply of it.[1]

IV. K'IRSA

Christmas is one of the four chief holidays [2] of the year. Abkhasians call it *K'irsa* (Megr. *K'irsa*), which denotes Christ. An Abkhaz considers it a great disgrace if he fails on this day to kill a goat or some other animal. On this day " the table is laid " also for the souls of ancestors.

(*a*) *Agwa-nàẖwa*

For some families it is obligatory to make an offering early in the morning on this day to *Agwa-nàẖwa*, for which *akwakwàr* are baked. The supplicant entreats that *Agwa-nàẖwa* grant them the warmth of his eyes and his heart. In translation the word denotes, " praying to heart." This " praying " is also known to the Gurians, under the name of " praying for the womb " (Geo. *Mutslis salotsavi*); Megrelians call it *Khatsitsi*.[3] According to I. Kipshidze, it is the New Year's Day breakfast.[4] In my opinion it is nothing more than a survival of the supplication described below.

(*b*) *Got'anùa* (*sharp'è-nàẖwa*)

Some *gvari*-s have preserved to this day the following custom. On Christmas Eve, the family go to bed very early; they rise, however, at midnight, and begin praying. Enough chickens are killed to provide one for every member of the family (blackbirds also may be used) or in their place a young goat; *akwakwàr* baked. All this is offered to *Got'anùa*; the food is consumed immediately after the prayer is ended, and the remains, if any, are not left but burnt without fail. All return to bed. The dawn must find them asleep. In Megrelian *got'anua* denotes morning-twilight, dawn, to grow light, to dawn, the Abkhasian equivalent of which is *sharp'-nàẖwa*, the morning prayer; the Megrelian term, however, is more in use.

I quote here the following story: " A female slave of a family,

[1] *Anàna*, in my opinion, is derived from *an*, mother; *gùnda*, probably from *gundi*, a swarm, a collection of something.

[2] Namely, the New Year, Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas.

[3] *Khatsitsi—khatsitsi* is called also a bride. (Cf. I. Kipshidze, *Gram. of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. *khat'etsi*.) (Ed. *Khrist. Vostok*.)

[4] *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. (where is also a reference to the explanation of the same word in Georgian by V. Beridze, *Sitqvishona*, s.v., Ed. *Kh. V.*).

/30 cont./

765 526 After the meal, the dzhiriti takes place, reminiscent of the tournaments of the Middle Ages. Now the fair sex occupies the passageway near the house. Young men on horseback assemble in front of the beauties and vie with each other in attempts to display their wit, inventiveness, and knowledge in speeches, and their bravery in the dzhigitovka /trick-riding/ which will follow.

The main dzhigitovka, tarchei /see foreign text/, consists of the following. One of the competing riders accepts from the host of the feast /31/ or from one of the beauties some strips of chintz, a small sewn boot, a rosary of chestnuts, or something else, and, holding this tarchei in his hand, he gallops ahead with it while the other lads pursue him and try to catch him and take away the tarchei. If someone is successful in this, the tarchei passes into the hands of the one who has taken it away from the first rider; then that one races off, and the others again chase after him. The one who escapes capture and manages to bring the tarchei back to the place where the competition started is the winner. The horsemen's competition does not end with this, however; they continue to prance around on horseback, pick up money from the ground at full gallop, etc.

765 541 Sometimes there are also horse-races at the mourning banquet. Children of eight to nine years of age are horsemen. A goal is pointed out to the competitors, and the first one to reach it wins something. In this case, the hosts present the winners with the horse of the deceased, with some animal, or with a khak (arshin or span) of chintz.

VI.

Religious Beliefs of the Abkhaz

• 771 "Up to the year 1867," wrote Mr. A. in his excellent article on the Abkhaz, "the religious situation among the Abkhaz was absurd in the extreme. One found there the rites of all religious doctrines, from fetishism to Christianity. These people had no precise conception of any religion, but adopted from all of them

/31 cont./

771 whatever stood out most sharply and acted most strongly upon their almost childish imagination" (1). Madame Giorgidze says: "At

1. See Sborn. sved. o kavk. gorts., No. V.

present the majority of the Abkhaz profess the Christian religion, the minority Mohammedan. In spite of this, the Abkhaz is little informed in either of the two religions and is really a heathen rather than Christian or Moslem" (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888.

1.

775 766 The Souls of the Dead -- Their Wanderings on Earth

The Abkhaz believes that human life does not end with earthly existence, but that it continues after death, /32/ or, in the words of the Abkhaz, "on the other side." He believes, in addition, that this life beyond the grave continues at the very place where the deceased is buried. It is not enough, therefore, to take a drowned body out of the river to bury it, for the soul of the deceased must also be evoked from the water and brought into the grave in which the body of the drowned man is buried. This is the ceremony of the evocation and capture of a drowned person's soul. Men and women gather on both sides of the river from which the corpse of the drowned man has been recovered. Across the river, from one bank to the other, a silk thread is stretched, from which a leather knapsack is hung, its lower end almost touching the water. The men and women then begin to the sound of the balalaika. The Abkhaz is convinced that the soul of the dead leaves the water and enters the knapsack when it hears the sounds of the balalaika and the singing. When the Abkhaz think that the soul has entered the bag, one of the men jumps into the water and ties it up. They then carry the

[534] [533]

[766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

[767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *antswa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1926, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nəhwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nəhwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nəhwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nəhwa* (*anəhwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateypa, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE ABKHASIAN NAME OF THE SUPREME BEING

By SIMON JANASHIA

[Atranslation of the article published in Georgian in *Dzelidsdeuli*—The Year Book, of the Georgian Philological Society, Tiflis, 1923–4, vol. i–ii, pp. 69–73.]

IT was Uslar who first observed that the Abkhasian name of the Supreme Being was in the plural.[1] He even quotes an example, i.e. *anṭswə́ dəuk'wa*,* the great God, lit. (*les*) *dieux grands*, in which the appearance of the adjective in the plural definitely testifies that, in the conception of the speaker, the ancient religious ideas—according to which God was not of one, but of many parts—were still in existence. The author remarks " only heathen Abkhasians say this ", the Chirstian and Muhammadan Abkhasians conceiving God quite definitely as the One, absolute Being.

Such an assertion was, perhaps, an excusable mistake on the part of the distinguished linguist, who was an orthodox Christian. It is impossible to divide the Abkhasians into such groups on the basis of their religious beliefs, despite the fact that formally they belong either to the Christian Church or to Islam. The example quoted by Uslar is probably one of those fortuitous discoveries whereby there suddenly emerges from the routine of ordinary usage a product of the national-spiritual creativeness belonging to the depths of the remote past.

Later, the same opinion (about the plural form) was put forward by Dcharaia [2] and Janashia.[3] The latter, however, thought that the word in question may have originated from the same *an*-root which in Abkhasian denotes the *mother*-notion.

Professor Marr shares only the first part of this view: he writes,[4] " . . . of great interest is the word *an*, god, which, in Abkhasian, appears usually as the plurale tantum *anṭswə́*, God, lit. ' gods '."

In the summer of 1921, while in Abkhasia, in the village Adzvibzha (in Abzhua, the Kodor district), where I was sent by the Tiflis State University on a philological research study, I was able to collect certain data which threw more light on the question, as will be seen.

In the course of my research work, I was able to establish the validity of the formation of the word in question by the discovery

* For the pronunciation of *ṭsw* and *k'w*, see p. 118, n. *, and p. 131, n. *. (Translator's note.)

[1] Uslar, P. K., *The Abkhasian Language* (in Russian). Tiflis, 1887, p. 78.

[2] Dcharaia, P., *On the Relation of the Abkhasian Language to the Japhetic Languages*, in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics* (in Russian), St. Petersburg, 1912, vol. iv, pp. 31–3.

[3] Janashia, N., *The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, in *The Christian East* (in Russian), St. Pb., 1913, vol. iv, issue i, pp. 74–5. [See the English translation in this number, pp. 118–9. ED.]

[4] Marr, N., *From a Linguistic Journey to Abkhasia* in *Izvestiya* (Bulletin) of the Imperial Academy of Sciences (in Russian), St. Pb., 1913, vol. vii, No. 6, p. 518.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Georgians. Thus, according to Iv. Gv. Gomelauri, the well-known pedagogue, in K'iziqi (Signakh district, in Kakhet'i) they say: *tchemi dsili ghmert'i*; *sheni dsili ghmert'i*, "my part of God," "thy part of God." A. Dsuladze, who is well acquainted with the life of the Gurian people, told me that similar expressions were also used in Guria.

Further, as the reader will see for himself, the word *an*, "mother" constitutes part of the names of a series of gods, and several of these names are of the feminine gender, as Dcharaia has also justly noticed. In this connection I should like to direct the attention of the reader to the names of two gods, namely, *jabrdn* and *zhwabrdn*.* Each of these words has in our opinion several connotations; *jabrdn* is compounded of several words: *j* is the root from the word *a-j-ma*, a goat; *a-b*, father; *r* the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural; and *an*, mother. Thus *jabrdn* denotes "father and mother of goats", i.e. "(fore)parents of goats", or "god of goats". In the same manner *zhwabrdn* is compounded of *a-zhw*, a cow, and of the components just explained, so that the whole denotes "father and mother of cows", i.e. "(fore)parents of cows".[1] It seems to me that at the dawning of their religio-philosophical life, the Abkhasians evidently worshipped equally both their male and female ancestors. How strong is this ancestor-worship among the Abkhasians even to-day will be shown in my work *The Ancestor Cult*.

Thus, as is the case of Dcharaia, I think that the word *antswd* is derived from the word *an* in the plural. I also think that the name *antswd*, of the Supreme Being, arose from the deification of ancestors. At first it was evidently used with the plural termination, and in the feminine gender, and later, in the course of time, from "many mothers-gods" arose the One God *antswd*.[2] The changing of the gender of gods is often observed in the religions of the primitive peoples, and *antswd* therefore constitutes no exception.[3]

Antswd is One, but He is plural as to His parts. All the gods, of which we will speak below, are subject to and obey Him as the Supreme Being. In the tales, I was told, it is said that *antswd's* mother came from a Megrelian princely *gvari* of Mkheidze, the Abkhasian form of

* The combination *zhw* is to be uttered with one breath impulse; it represents a labialised variety of "*zh*" (= French "*j*"). Cf. "*tsw*", p. 118, n. *. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Such a morphological interpretation does not appear admissible, as the word *an*, if in this case it denotes "mother", is never combined with *ab*, father, but governs the first part of the compound word, *jab* and *zhwab*, which, judging from the relative infix *r*, is assumed to be plural. [Note by the Editor, *Khr. V.*]

[2] And not *dsitswa*, as it should have sounded and does really sound "mothers". See above, pp. 118–19. [Ed., *Khris. Ves.*]

[3] If this supposition turns out to be justified, and the word *antswd* is not of Sumero-Babylono-Assyrian origin (from *An*, *Anu*), its significance as a term employed in the history of religious beliefs generally will be greatly increased.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVIbZh9

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*

1. *Jabrən*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nə̀hwa*, which is derived from *a-nə̀hwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabrən*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashə̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswə̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəsa*, a combination of *adswə̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *ərsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'hwəs-tsk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "h" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "hw" represents a labialized variety of "h". [Translator's Note.]

† The combination "*dzw*" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "*dz*". For this latter sound see p. 329 (*ẓ*). [Translator's Note.]

[1] N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskii Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138. (A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashə̀* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

/34 cont./

795 were wandering about hungry, feeding only upon the charity of the
769 hundred men. Having seen Sesrkva the hero in such a state, his friend asked him, Sesrkva! You surpassed everyone in the wide world. What has befallen you in the life beyond the grave that you are unable to receive even one guest? Sesrkva answered, How then can I receive guests, when I must beg for myself and my horse? When he awakened, his friend realized that no funeral banquet had been held for Sesrkva, so he immediately arranged a rich funeral-banquet for him. Once more he had a dream: Sesrkva was now in as good a condition as his hundred companions and was able to receive guests."

2. "Two persons were walking along; one of them had a fat goat, skinned and cut up, hidden in a sack. In the evening someone began to pursue them, whistling as he ran. The man with the load said to him, Leave me alone! What do you want of me? Having said this, he went his way, but the ghost followed him. His companion guessed what was the matter and advised the friend to cut off a piece of meat to throw to the ghost. The advice was taken and the piece of meat thrown -- the whistling and the pursuit stopped immediately."

3. "The people of Mokvi every year arranged their funeral banquets for the dead, who were buried in the upper part of the burial-ground, while the people of Morkvuli did not do this for the dead buried in the lower part of the burial-ground. Therefore the Mokvi dead mocked the Morkvuli dead; 'You who find nothing!' The others responded to this: 'When our kinsmen find something for themselves, we shall get something, too.' The dead gathered together at night and held dances on the aphstsa r kvashartha (place for the dances of the dead). Everybody could see the footprints of the dancing souls."

● 794 /35/ The souls of the dead as well as those of the living,
795 and in particular those of the witches, are capable from time
754 to time of wandering about with evil intentions, as sucking milk from nipples, drawing out the heart and liver, etc. Even the water element will not accept witches, and they do not drown in water. They have their own chief, Roskipi, who dwells

/35 cont./

774 upon the summit of the mountain Tabakona. They are divided
775 into groups according to their degree of power: the younger ones
754 usually travel upon mice, frogs, cats, etc., the older ones on foxes, wolves, etc. On Assumption Eve they are all obliged to gather upon the Tabakona for the annual report of their deeds to their sovereign, Roskipi, and to produce material proof of their industrious service -- a heart taken from a man or animal, a liver, eyes, nails, hair, etc. To avoid attack from witches,
789 the Abkhaz take the following measures: during the fast of the
785 Assumption they erect crosses and stick candles in their hair, and
796 on the eve of the Assumption they shoot off rifles, sing, and spend the whole night in vigil. The Abkhaz believes that a witch can simultaneously be at home, among people, and on top of the mountain Tabakona. The Abkhaz explain such a splitting-up of a person by saying that it is not the witch herself that wanders about, but her accessory soul (aphschchda = superfluous soul).

2.

000 The True God -- Paganism -- The Principal and Secondary Gods of the Abkhaz -- Causes of Polytheism -- "Creators" and "Forgers" -- Fate or Predestination.

776 To assist the supreme being, endowed with all the qualities with which, according to our understanding, God is endowed, says Mr. A., Abkhaz mythology added a number of other deities, assigning to each his particular designation. These assisting deities, according to their understanding, were created by the Almighty before man and the universe came into being, and
776 people at prayer appeal through them to God himself. God
782 himself never descends to earth, but if he needs to punish someone or to grant someone his grace, he sends out one of his assistants. In the prayers which are said and sung at sacrifices and other

/35 cont./

776 [174] affected man in his infant stage; no wonder the Abkhaz personifies and deifies all these, together with trees, woods, fields, etc.; he deifies some things because they bring him help, others because they do him harm. Accordingly, Abkhaz mythology created special protective deities for every activity /37/ of man, whether agriculture, industry, art, or herding. Some of these are, for instance: Aithar, the protector of cattle; Dzhadzha, god of sowing; Shasha, god of the smithy, and others. Many of these deities are female; for instance, the protector of the element of water, "mother of the water," is a woman; the earth itself is personified as a woman; there is also a "lady-wind"; the ancestor of cattle is female, as is the ancestor of nanny-goats; the god of sowing, Dzhadzha, and others are also female.

777 776 Besides these deities, there are the Ashatsa-chaphatsa, the "creator" and "forger" gods. There are either two of them, or many. Under the influence of Christianity, they are presented in the form of angels. "Every soul" is born through Ashatsa-chaphatsa. They determine the future of the newborn child, his happiness and unhappiness, the length of his life and the hour of his death, and they make an inscription on his forehead (lakhints'ara /see foreign text/) concerning all this. The Abkhaz is certain that these inscriptions on the forehead exist and believes that anyone can confirm it with his own eyes. Incidentally, let us tell an Abkhaz tale that illustrates the inevitability of predestination or fate.

• [174]

777 776 539 In the night two men set out to steal. On the way they were caught in a heavy rainstorm. They took refuge under the porch of a peasant's hut. Peeping in, they saw a group of women gathered, among them a woman in labor, who shortly afterwards gave birth to a girl. The "creators" and "forgers" did not hesitate to appear. One of them said, "The newborn girl shall become the wife of one of the thieves outside that are looking in. This shall be his fate." The second of the "creators" and "forgers" confirmed the words of the first. The thief, already middle-aged, said on hearing this, "I am not young even now, and she has just

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [795] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes marula (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pistol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both [302] sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [268] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few

/31 cont./

771 whatever stood out most sharply and acted most strongly upon their almost childish imagination" (1). Madame Giorgidze says: "At

1. See Sborn. sved. o kavk. gorts., No. V.

present the majority of the Abkhaz profess the Christian religion, the minority Mohammedan. In spite of this, the Abkhaz is little informed in either of the two religions and is really a heathen rather than Christian or Moslem" (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888.

1.

• 775 766 The Souls of the Dead -- Their Wanderings on Earth

The Abkhaz believes that human life does not end with earthly existence, but that it continues after death, /32/ or, in the words of the Abkhaz, "on the other side." He believes, in addition, that this life beyond the grave continues at the very place where the deceased is buried. It is not enough, therefore, to take a drowned body out of the river to bury it, for the soul of the deceased must also be evoked from the water and brought into the grave in which the body of the drowned man is buried. This is the ceremony of the evocation and capture of a drowned person's soul. Men and women gather on both sides of the river from which the corpse of the drowned man has been recovered. Across the river, from one bank to the other, a silk thread is stretched, from which a leather knapsack is hung, its lower end almost touching the water. The men and women then begin to the sound of the balalaika. The Abkhaz is convinced that the soul of the dead leaves the water and enters the knapsack when it hears the sounds of the balalaika and the singing. When the Abkhaz think that the soul has entered the bag, one of the men jumps into the water and ties it up. They then carry the

[534] [533]

/32 cont./

775 knapsack with great rejoicing to the burial-ground, where,
[766] through a hole drilled in the knapsack, the captured soul passes into the grave of the one who drowned.

769 In Abkhazia the dead are highly honored. The burial-
[764] grounds, as we have said, lie on high, picturesque places and are surrounded by fences. Shingled houses of a kind the Abkhaz do not make for themselves are built over the graves. Near the graves various fruit trees are planted -- apple, pear, peach, quince, etc. On the graves themselves the Abkhaz lay slices of melons, watermelons, cucumbers, etc. All this serves to confirm the belief that beyond the grave the souls of the dead require food, drink, lodging, etc., just like the living.

And in fact the Abkhaz do believe that the dead will enjoy, for example, the piece of melon placed on the grave. Because of this belief, for almost a full year after a death,
[264] a special share of each meal is laid on the table for the deceased, and banquets are held in his memory, etc. Besides this, annual funeral-feasts are held on the eve of the paternal Saturday for those recently deceased, and on the paternal Saturday itself funeral-feasts are held for those deceased longer. At the slaughter of the sacrificial animal, the head of the family says, "If there
769 is a life beyond the grave, here is this (offering) to your soul."
782 Then as food is prepared and placed on the tablecloth, the head of the family stands in front of the tablecloth and again says, "Deceased ones /33/, grant us the blessing of your souls! Do not harm us by death (mortification)! Make us and our cattle increase (multiply)! etc. At the conclusion of this invocation, he makes the sign of the cross in the air over the tablecloth with an iron spit and says, "All this, prepared by the power of fire and water, is sacrificed to your souls, if indeed there be a life beyond the grave." Having said this, the head of the family takes a glass of wine and drinks it; after this he puts pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificed animal into a slice of gomi, pours a little wine over it, and throws it into the yard, saying:
775 "And this is for you, guiding and escorting souls." From this we
769 perceive that in Abkhaz belief the living relatives of the dead

/33 cont./

775 769 are visited by the souls of the deceased, together with other souls accompanying them. The Abkhaz believes that the more magnificently they (souls of the deceased) are met and treated, the more satisfied and generous they will be and the more co-operation and patronage they will give the living -- in the opposite situation, they would only harm the living. Those souls satisfied with their reception, upon their return to the souls of other deceased relatives, express their joy and praise the esteem paid them; unsatisfied souls, however, return extremely irritated and, when asked by the other souls about their reception, answer, "What could we have found there, if they themselves turn out to be just such dead ones as we?" The Abkhaz believe that in this case the unsatisfied souls' most terrible anger will fall on several members of the family that has thus failed to receive their relatives' souls in a proper manner.

The Abkhaz believe firmly that the souls of the deceased leave their graves and visit their living kin. They stand near [782] their houses and whistle; they are placated by the pouring of wine or the throwing out of something. These souls of the dead like to leave their graves, particularly at night; they stand near the road and when they see a traveler they run after him in pursuit. Let us hear how the Abkhaz themselves report the significance of funeral banquets:

1. "Sesrkva was a well-known and brave man. During one raid, he lost his hundred companions in a skirmish; they were all killed. Sesrkva slaughtered a large number of bulls and rams and arranged a funeral banquet for his companions. Afterwards he himself was /34/ killed in a skirmish and buried none knew where. A friend of his expressed the wish to find Sesrkva's grave in order to mourn for him. After a lengthy search he at last found it and mourned Sesrkva, and because his village was far away and the hour late, he decided to spend the night right there. Having tied his horse to a tree, he lay down under an oak and soon fell asleep. He then dreamed that Sesrkva's hundred lads were in an excellent position in the other world; they were satisfied with everything, for they treated their guests honorably and fed their horses well. But Sesrkva himself and his horse

/34 cont./

775 769 were wandering about hungry, feeding only upon the charity of the hundred men. Having seen Sesrkva the hero in such a state, his friend asked him, Sesrkva! You surpassed everyone in the wide world. What has befallen you in the life beyond the grave that you are unable to receive even one guest? Sesrkva answered, How then can I receive guests, when I must beg for myself and my horse? When he awakened, his friend realized that no funeral banquet had been held for Sesrkva, so he immediately arranged a rich funeral-banquet for him. Once more he had a dream: Sesrkva was now in as good a condition as his hundred companions and was able to receive guests."

2. "Two persons were walking along; one of them had a fat goat, skinned and cut up, hidden in a sack. In the evening someone began to pursue them, whistling as he ran. The man with the load said to him, Leave me alone! What do you want of me? Having said this, he went his way, but the ghost followed him. His companion guessed what was the matter and advised the friend to cut off a piece of meat to throw to the ghost. The advice was taken and the piece of meat thrown -- the whistling and the pursuit stopped immediately."

3. "The people of Mokvi every year arranged their funeral banquets for the dead, who were buried in the upper part of the burial-ground, while the people of Morkvuli did not do this for the dead buried in the lower part of the burial-ground. Therefore the Mokvi dead mocked the Morkvuli dead; 'You who find nothing!' The others responded to this: 'When our kinsmen find something for themselves, we shall get something, too.' The dead gathered together at night and held dances on the aphstsa r kvashartha (place for the dances of the dead). Everybody could see the footprints of the dancing souls."

794 795 754 /35/ The souls of the dead as well as those of the living, and in particular those of the witches, are capable from time to time of wandering about with evil intentions, as sucking milk from nipples, drawing out the heart and liver, etc. Even the water element will not accept witches, and they do not drown in water. They have their own chief, Roskipi, who dwells

/35 cont./

upon the summit of the mountain Tabakona. They are divided into groups according to their degree of power: the younger ones usually travel upon mice, frogs, cats, etc., the older ones on foxes, wolves, etc. On Assumption Eve they are all obliged to gather upon the Tabakona for the annual report of their deeds to their sovereign, Roskipi, and to produce material proof of their industrious service -- a heart taken from a man or animal, a liver, eyes, nails, hair, etc. To avoid attack from witches, the Abkhaz take the following measures: during the fast of the Assumption they erect crosses and stick candles in their hair, and on the eve of the Assumption they shoot off rifles, sing, and spend the whole night in vigil. The Abkhaz believes that a witch can simultaneously be at home, among people, and on top of the mountain Tabakona. The Abkhaz explain such a splitting-up of a person by saying that it is not the witch herself that wanders about, but her accessory soul (aphschchda = superfluous soul).

2.

The True God -- Paganism -- The Principal and Secondary Gods of the Abkhaz -- Causes of Polytheism -- "Creators" and "Forgers" -- Fate or Predestination.

To assist the supreme being, endowed with all the qualities with which, according to our understanding, God is endowed, says Mr. A., Abkhaz mythology added a number of other deities, assigning to each his particular designation. These assisting deities, according to their understanding, were created by the Almighty before man and the universe came into being, and people at prayer appeal through them to God himself. God himself never descends to earth, but if he needs to punish someone or to grant someone his grace, he sends out one of his assistants. In the prayers which are said and sung at sacrifices and other

/43 cont./

782 824 from the treetop. May the fresh twig, when I step on it with my foot, first grow stronger and then, being strengthened, grow fresh (soft), etc."

6.

782 755 A Prayer in Honor of Adnqa or (the same thing) "the Outer Ones"

[775] [753] The souls of the dead, the "outer ones," are often the cause of sickness in man and his cattle. They often become angry, and the outward signs of such anger are frequent yawning, sleepiness, and general exhaustion visited upon the culprit. If the one afflicted does not satisfy the angered "outer ones" with offerings and prayers, an inevitable death awaits him. On one of the Saturdays a meal is prepared of young rams' meat, chicken, sour milk, and the meat of a cow, if the soul of a woman is angered, and all these provisions are laid out on a tablecloth under the eaves, on both sides of which are placed a dress and valuable /44/ objects.

The sick man or woman is placed in the middle of a circle and either a man or a woman, according to the sex of the sick person, prays and begs the living and the dead (Angi-phsngis) to have mercy upon the sick and to grant him health and to accept the food prepared for them. The person pronouncing the prayer for the sick one then passes his hand over the back of the sick person and gives him freedom from his sickness ("azati"). If the ailment is thought to be caused by the soul of a prince or of some other personage of [825] high rank, a tethered horse is untied and released in a field at the concluding words of the prayer: "This (horse) is for your soul." According to Abkhaz belief, such a horse soon swells up and dies.

[765 cont.] The mother, the wife, and the foster mother mourn at the grave for forty days in the morning and in the evening, and for the same length of time, or sometimes for a whole year, food for the deceased is put on the table during meals.

[766] The first memorial service takes place on the fortieth day, the second one during the second year, usually in the autumn. On the evening preceding the latter (ap's-khuvra = assigning to the soul), the clothes, the horse with the saddle, and the weapons of the deceased are laid out, there is mourning in the house and at the grave, and sacrificial animals are slaughtered. A party of village members in mourning clothes and barefoot bring up animals and food; among them a man carries lighted candles on a twig-shaped holder, as do the oxen on their horns. The next day the horse of the dead man is led around in a circle three times in a field, and the relatives follow it, lamenting in mourning clothes; after this, the soul of the dead, which until then had remained invisibly among them for the time being, has finally departed from the earth. After the memorial feast the youths and men hold oratory exercises, shooting matches, and races, as among the Khevsur (see p. 738 [untranslated], and below, p.30).

The burial grounds, which contain the graves for each kin group, usually lie on elevations and are fenced in. Small houses of planks with shingle roofs--in contrast to the usual building style--are erected over the graves, which are themselves lined with boards, and fruit trees are planted nearby.

Among the Abkhaz, too, there is the belief that the souls of the dead have the same needs as the living, and for this reason they build these grave-shelters, lay slices of melon and cucumber on the graves, and for a year after death put food for them on the table during the meals. At the second memorial celebration the father of the house places in the yard a millet-dumpling over which wine has been poured and pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animal. If the souls are neglected, they come to the house at night and whistle, whereupon food and wine is given to them. When the souls, the "outer ones," are angered, they bring about weakness and sickness among animals and men. Then one tries to console

Cherkess RH5

A [766 cont.] Then one tries to console

775 [755] the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

A 775 766 When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

A 175 771 [767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

A [778] [788]

C 771

A [771]

A 772 [171] The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

/35 cont./

upon the summit of the mountain Tabakona. They are divided into groups according to their degree of power: the younger ones usually travel upon mice, frogs, cats, etc., the older ones on foxes, wolves, etc. On Assumption Eve they are all obliged to gather upon the Tabakona for the annual report of their deeds to their sovereign, Roskipi, and to produce material proof of their industrious service -- a heart taken from a man or animal, a liver, eyes, nails, hair, etc. To avoid attack from witches, the Abkhaz take the following measures: during the fast of the Assumption they erect crosses and stick candles in their hair, and on the eve of the Assumption they shoot off rifles, sing, and spend the whole night in vigil. The Abkhaz believes that a witch can simultaneously be at home, among people, and on top of the mountain Tabakona. The Abkhaz explain such a splitting-up of a person by saying that it is not the witch herself that wanders about, but her accessory soul (aphschchda = superfluous soul).

2.

The True God -- Paganism -- The Principal and Secondary Gods of the Abkhaz -- Causes of Polytheism -- "Creators" and "Forgers" -- Fate or Predestination.

To assist the supreme being, endowed with all the qualities with which, according to our understanding, God is endowed, says Mr. A., Abkhaz mythology added a number of other deities, assigning to each his particular designation. These assisting deities, according to their understanding, were created by the Almighty before man and the universe came into being, and people at prayer appeal through them to God himself. God himself never descends to earth, but if he needs to punish someone or to grant someone his grace, he sends out one of his assistants. In the prayers which are said and sung at sacrifices and other

/35 cont./
176 religious ceremonies, the Abkhaz addresses God thus: Akhdau
[182] (or antsa-daukva) /36/ zlypkha-khkhaura, which means "Great God, merciful one, gracious one."

Besides this merciful god, the Abkhaz, as we have said, have other secondary gods, whose creation was necessitated by the people's needs. Every atmospheric phenomenon, every danger threatening a man or his property, every type of toil assuring the existence of man created in the childish imaginations of these people separate, invisible protectors, ruling over all. These deities have no images, since they appear in different forms according to the circumstances; nevertheless, according to the understanding of the Abkhaz, not to be doubted, for it is felt in all the good and evil that can happen in the life of a person. Every step of a man is under their control and every departure from the true way immediately evokes punishment by them.

174 As science has proved by a multitude of analogous examples
176 from other primitive peoples, there can be no doubt that nature and its phenomena have played an enormous role in the development of the religious ideas and theistic images of the Abkhaz people. Their childlike mentality and imagination were undoubtedly strongly influenced by the azure sky, resting like an immense vault upon the earth, now threateningly and severely looking down from behind the clouds, now smiling with its fiery eyes, the sun by day and the moon and the stars by night. Mother Earth herself also exerted her influence upon them, for she is indeed mother, nurse, provider, and source of blessings and abundance; nor did the sun, the "eye of heaven," giving warmth and life to the whole world, remain without influence on their childlike imaginations, nor the moon, the "guard of night," which quietly floats on the vault of the sky and conquers the darkness of night; the threatening thunder bolt, instilling terror and destroying everything in its way; the air, now quiet and friendly and still, now threateningly perturbed and howling; the colorful, beautiful rainbow, this "belt" of the sky; the dawn, that "gate of Day"... All this and much else, of course, greatly

/35 cont./

776 [174] affected man in his infant stage; no wonder the Abkhaz personifies and deifies all these, together with trees, woods, fields, etc.; he deifies some things because they bring him help, others because they do him harm. Accordingly, Abkhaz mythology created special protective deities for every activity /37/ of man, whether agriculture, industry, art, or herding. Some of these are, for instance: Aithar, the protector of cattle; Dzhadzha, god of sowing; Shasha, god of the smithy, and others. Many of these deities are female; for instance, the protector of the element of water, "mother of the water," is a woman; the earth itself is personified as a woman; there is also a "lady-wind"; the ancestor of cattle is female, as is the ancestor of nanny-goats; the god of sowing, Dzhadzha, and others are also female.

777 776 [174] Besides these deities, there are the Ashatsa-chaphatsa, the "creator" and "forger" gods. There are either two of them, or many. Under the influence of Christianity, they are presented in the form of angels. "Every soul" is born through Ashatsa-chaphatsa. They determine the future of the newborn child, his happiness and unhappiness, the length of his life and the hour of his death, and they make an inscription on his forehead (lakhints'ara /see foreign text/) concerning all this. The Abkhaz is certain that these inscriptions on the forehead exist and believes that anyone can confirm it with his own eyes. Incidentally, let us tell an Abkhaz tale that illustrates the inevitability of predestination or fate.

777 776 539 In the night two men set out to steal. On the way they were caught in a heavy rainstorm. They took refuge under the porch of a peasant's hut. Peeping in, they saw a group of women gathered, among them a woman in labor, who shortly afterwards gave birth to a girl. The "creators" and "forgers" did not hesitate to appear. One of them said, "The newborn girl shall become the wife of one of the thieves outside that are looking in. This shall be his fate." The second of the "creators" and "forgers" confirmed the words of the first. The thief, already middle-aged, said on hearing this, "I am not young even now, and she has just

/37 cont./

777 been born; God save me from such a marriage." And so he
776 planned to kill the newborn baby; when everyone in the
539 house had fallen asleep, he slipped quietly in, carried the child out, ripped open her belly, and threw it upon the flat roof of the hut. Then the two thieves went on their way. The child's wailing awakened the women, who found her, sewed up the wound with silk thread, and thus saved her from death. And no matter how hard the thief about whom the above-mentioned prophecy was made tried to find a wife, he was /38/ unsuccessful. Meanwhile the girl who he thought was dead reached marriageable age and one day somehow met the thief. He immediately fell in love with her and married her. Then it was shown how inevitably every predestination and decision made by the "creator-forgers" is fulfilled.

VII.

Prayers in Honor of the Deities

782 Prayer is the name given to those religious ceremonies and rites accompanied by sacrifices in honor of the gods which are performed according to a definite pattern set and sanctified from olden times.

[776] Each deity may independently show, within his sphere of activity, grace or wrath toward man; for instance, he may send sickness or misfortune on him or his cattle, etc.
[787] The Abkhaz easily determine by special signs whether the
[688] deities' anger is the result of deviations from the fixed pattern of the religious rites. To avert the wrath of the gods caused by omissions in prayers and sacrifices, they must repeat the offerings and complete whatever was omitted the first time; uncorrected omissions and mistakes in ritual weigh heavily as guilt felt toward the angry gods, even upon generations
[755] far removed from the sinners. If anyone falls ill in conse-
[753] quence of neglect in ritual toward one or another god, he must offer him a sacrifice in order to recover. If he is

/40 cont./

782 prescribes a prayer to the water, which is thought to be the
755 cause of the illness. Since the protectress of the waters,
[791] the "Mother of Water," is a woman, a sinless old woman is invited to the ceremony.

• 776 A large, clear, inaccessible fresh-water lake is thought
[778] to be the residence of the "Mother of Water"; she may also dwell in a pure spring, untouched by anything unclean, such as a pig, etc. The "Mother of Water" sometimes comes out of her dwelling to the shore, and at that time anyone may see her. This is how the Abkhaz describe this "Mother of Water." She is a most beautiful, bewitching woman; her locks are incomparable and chestnut in color; her eyes are laughing. The Abkhaz who has been bewitched by her talks
753 to his comrades thus: "Eh, brothers, I have been vanquished
776 by the 'Mother of the Water,' and from now on I no longer
539 belong to your society. Recently I rode into a dense forest and saw a table spread there under a big oak; a mirror and a lighted candle stood nearby; the 'Mother of the Water' was sitting in front of the mirror, smiling at her own beauty and combing her long hair, which reached the ground. My arms fell to my sides from exhaustion; I could not take my eyes from that wonderful vision. When she saw me, she quickly arranged her hair and came towards me. I felt giddy... Without a word she raised all ten fingers, asking me, 'Are you willing to be my husband for ten years or not?' I shook my head, but she would not stop, and with the proper number of fingers raised, she offered me in turn nine, eight, seven years, and so on /41/ of marriage. As I kept on refusing, she finally raised her last little finger and fixed her gaze upon me. I immediately gave my consent..." (1).

1. "Etnograf. pis'ma iz Abkhazii /Ethnographical letters from Abkhazia/," Konst. Machavariani, Droeba, 1884-1885.

755
782 The "pure" old woman who was invited to the ceremony,

/42 cont./

755 782 [789] candles, she lets it float down the stream, saying, "Amuse yourself with this one, instead of the sick person." Finally the old praying-woman passes her hand over the sick person's back, raises him, and having given him liberty ("azati") from his ailment, she sends him home, instructing him not to look around on his way back. The food brought to the stream is eaten on the spot by the participants in the ceremony; the remains from the table are thrown into the water and the dishes washed clean.

This prayer-ritual is considered the most sacred of all in Abkhazia, and the name of the rainbow, Atsaqva, is pronounced with great reverence. The Abkhaz claims that as [821] a consequence of this ceremony in the rainbow's honor the rain appears.

/43/ 4.

782 The Prayer-Ceremony in Honor of the Wind (Phsharnha)

A large loaf of bread with cheese is prepared, placed in a basket, and carried some distance from the house. Here [776] a prayer is said to "Lady Wind" (a deity of female sex), in [824] which she is asked to bring good and to carry off evil and to [777] deliver them from all sorts of misfortunes, etc. Then the middle part of the loaf is cut out, carried into the forest, and hung on an oak tree near the top. The next day, the one who first comes near the oak tree feasts on this offering.

5.

A Prayer in Honor of a Tree

782 824 On Assumption Day, vitushki are baked according to the number of men in the family; then the master of the house, with his household, approaches any kind of young tree and, putting his foot on it, prays, "Tree, give me your blessing and happiness ... that I may safely come down

/44 cont./

7.

782
585
[076]

The Prayer Ceremony in Honor of Azhahara

The Abkhaz call the protector or genius of the house and hearth by the name Azhahara in whose honor is performed the ceremony for a young married couple in the stage of their marriage before they have appeared together before their elders and the young woman is for the first time led into her husband's main house, or when the bride is invited into her father's house. One of the oldest members of the family sticks pieces of the heart and liver of a sacrificial animal on a spit and begs Azhahara to protect the young couple at home and out of doors.

8.

Alishkantra

782
231
[076]

Alishkantra is the "mistress" of dogs. In the opinion of the Abkhaz, the owner of good dogs will also be fortunate in the multiplication of his cattle; good fortune in dogs is associated with good fortune in all domestic animals. Therefore before praying to other god-protectors of domestic and wild animals, the Abkhaz prays to Alishkantra to grant him luck with good dogs and the opportunity to raise and breed them.

9.

/45/ A Prayer in Honor of Zhabran

[076]
[796]
[262]

Zhabran is the protector of animals. Every Abkhaz owning cattle performs the prayer-ceremony in his honor on "Cheese Saturday." For this they prepare suluguni (a big cheese) called "sacred cheese"; bread dough is placed on the hearth, in which a man puts a core of suluguni, whereupon he prays, "Prefer me to all those pronouncing your name;

/45 cont./

[782] make my cattle multiply; make them increase to such an
231 extent that in the future I may pray to you and offer you a cheese as big as this loaf of bread and my courtyard will have no room for all my cattle. Preserve my cattle from all trouble and misfortunes both at home and outside; grant that my cattle will lose only old hair and dung; grant that my herd will be so large that an animal walking in the rear will be unable to overtake one running in the front; may the calves play like young bears and shine like young stallions. This I ask of you." Then the person praying puts three walnut branches in the bread dough and, striking against the ceiling, exclaims, "Voots! chiphsh!" (a call to summon cattle). The same ceremony is performed on the Thursday of "Cheese-
[796] week" in honor of the protector of goats; it is called Dzhabran.

10.

A Prayer in Honor of Aithar

• [796] Aithar is the protector of domestic cattle and the
[796] farm economy. The prayers to him are held on a Saturday, except during Lent, because offerings to him must consist of milk products, and among the rich the offering is a milk-fed calf. The customary dish at this time is a thin gruel made with the milk of a cow that has recently calved. The shepherds stand around a kettle or pot filled with gruel; the oldest of them, holding a wax candle, pronounces a prayer: "Aithar, grant me superiority above all those who pronounce your name." He then begs Aithar to increase his herds and to protect them from beasts of prey. Upon concluding /46/ the prayer, the shepherd throws three spoonfuls of gruel into a brazier with coals standing nearby, and the participants eat the rest. If the inhabitants of the whole village or a part of it perform the ceremony in honor of Aithar, then a calf is sacrificed, which is slaughtered by the most respected old man, who first pronounces a prayer. After the meat of the calf has been cooked or roasted, the same old man

/46 cont./

pronounces a prayer the second time, cutting off pieces from different parts of the animal and offering them to Aithar by throwing them on the red-hot coals.

11.

Azhvephshaa (Abn-intsvakhu)

Azhvephshaa is the god of the forests and wild animals. Hunters sacrifice to him before setting out on a hunt, usually the middle or at the end of December. For the sacrifice, they jointly buy a ram or a goat. When it is roasted, the oldest huntsman prays to Azhvephshaa to send success for their undertaking; at the conclusion of the prayers, he throws small pieces of roasted meat and a piece of incense on the coals. Each of the remaining hunters repeats the prayer in turn, adding his own wishes and indicating the particular animal he would like to kill, while throwing pieces of incense on the coals.

12.

Dzhadzha and Anaphanga

Dzhadzha is the patroness of the crops. Prayers to her are offered twice a year: in March, at the beginning of spring, and in November, after the maize has been stored. Praying to Dzhadzha is not accompanied by any special solemnity; it is performed quietly by each individual family. Rich landowners sometimes invite their former dependents to the prayer, particularly those who have taken part in the sowing and reaping of their crops. On the day set aside for prayer, dishes made exclusively of grain and fruits grown by the master of the house are prepared. After the food has been placed on the table, the oldest member of the family /47/ addresses a prayer to Dzhadzha, thanking him for the good harvest or begging him to send everything in abundance. For the spring prayer to Dzhadzha, all the dishes prepared are lenten.

/47 cont./

782 241 [776] The Abkhaz asks of Anaphanga, the goddess of crops: "Wherever I draw my furrow and strike with iron and with implement, may an abundance of grain be granted me; grant happiness to the sower and to the consumer." During reaping, when the sheaves are first brought home, the Abkhaz prays in honor of Anaphanga; during the fast of Assumption, however, a cross is made of the ears; kernels of maize and beans are fastened to a candle to avert possible harm by evil spirits, e.g., by Dzhadzha herself. This [776] Dzhadzha is an ugly goddess, short and fat; when she comes into a field she exclaims, "Natsvis, natsvis" (little finger! little finger!), i.e., the wish that the maize in that field grow no higher than a little finger, but if one pursues Dzhadzha with the words, "Raki dzaki, raki dzaki" ("cubit-span, cubit-span"), she leaves the field and her wish does not come true.

[243] Before the threshing of the gomi /millet/ the Abkhaz pray to the great goddesses to keep the whole family in good health and to permit the whole household in future, and at the head the lady of the house herself, to gather at the beater for the threshing of the gomi (satsekhveli).

13.

A Prayer for the Bees

782 231 The Abkhaz bake a round loaf of bread with cheese, take it to the bee-garden, and pray to Ananagunda for the preservation of their bees; upon returning home, they break the loaf and eat it without looking at one another, for which some stand facing one door, some another.

14.

Prayer to the Sun and the Moon

782 821 The Abkhaz addresses the sun with the following prayer: "Sunlight, withhold not your benevolence from us, warmth

/48 cont./
753 "hung on the girls' ears." Rheumatic pains in the knees, instability of character, general weakness of the organism of a person, etc. -- all these are consequences of a
789 "weighty cause." To avert the sickness, a button is fastened to the ear like an earring. An innocent and sinless woman
755 leads the ailing person to a nut-bush and makes him kneel;
782 she drives seven /49/ sticks of nut-wood into the ground around him, fastens a lighted candle to each of them, and prays
[776] on behalf of the sick person to hanipha, the genius, walking along the rocks.

18.

Prayer in Honor of the Supreme Being

776
753 This supreme being is believed to be the cause of all kinds of sickness in man. When the body-temperature of a seriously sick person fluctuates greatly and he is alternately thrown into a fever and chills, when he faints or loses consciousness and regains it momentarily, and then begins to toss and become delirious, to sing songs, to mumble prayers, etc., the Abkhaz believe that all these severe pathological conditions are unmistakable signs of action by a superior force, by the supreme deities (Antsa r mzz) on the sick person -- "there is a divine cause." The Abkhaz are convinced that this "divine cause" has taken up its abode in the sick person and therefore they say, Antsa drthoup, i.e., "a god
755 came to visit." When the female fortune-teller confirms
[787] that the cause of the sickness is indeed that "a god took up his abode" in the sick person, then everyone in the house must assume a gay appearance and rejoice instead of grieving, for "where the god has taken up his abode, there can be nothing but rejoicing." Therefore the village youth gathers in the house of such a patient and all begin to sing and dance, and even the sick person is made to take part in the dances and singing, if he is strong enough to do so.

[782] The prayer-sacrifice is carried out near the house on the edge of a forest. The offering is a goat or a kid, a

/49 cont./

755 782 ram or a lamb, together with loaves of bread, etc. All this is taken to the place selected, and the patient himself [562] is led there. No women are present, for they are not allowed to approach this sacred place. A venerable man, holding a candle, declares, "Great god, as is proper and as the fortune-teller has prescribed, the worshiper today stands before you; he has brought sacrificial animals and loaves of bread ... . Have mercy upon him, be merciful to him, if he has sinned before you, forgive him. I beg you to let him go from this day forward, to leave him and free him like a loosened knot." While saying these words, the venerable man moves the candle around the patient, lights it, and places it nearby. He then /50/ takes another candle [776] and prays to Michael-Gabriel. Upon the completion of this ceremony, the sick person returns home alone, while the others sit down to a meal.

One such ceremony, however, is not considered sufficient for the send-off of so eminent a guest as a god. The [796] Abkhaz is therefore obliged to repeat the ceremony annually. One day a week is set aside as a holiday in honor of that same supreme being; this day is considered such a sacred one that the house even remains unswept, etc.

19.

Aphi

776 [821] Aphi (2) is the god and master of the thunder, lightning,

[113] 2. See Sborn. sveden. o kavk. gortsakh, No. V, Tiflis, 1871, pp. 15-16, article "Religioznyye verovaniye abkhaztsev /Religious beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A. -- where, by the way, this deity is called Afy.

[782] and all atmospheric phenomena in general. The most solemn prayers in Abkhazia are offered in honor of this god.

/52 cont./

2. Ibid., p. 162.

175 of Syracuse (who lived about the middle of the fourth
764 century B.C.) said /53/ that "it is not accepted among the Colchians either to bury or to burn the corpses of men. They put these corpses in fresh animal-hides and hang them on trees. They commit to the earth the corpses of women, however, ... They venerate heaven and earth above all" (1).

1. Ibid., p. 208.

20.

Shasha

326
796

Under the name of Shasha the Abkhaz understand the inventor of the craft of the smith. They say of him, "Shasha khe ah-dou," which means, "Shasha, the great lord of trades." Shasha or Shash was the first blacksmith. He picked up the red-hot iron, not with tongs, but with his hands, and he forged it, not on an anvil, but on his knees. He is the inventor not only of the craft of the smith, but the inventor-patron of 363 other crafts as well. The smithy with all its appurtenances is the image of Shasha (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888, No. 186.

[782] [796] [419]

Prayers are offered up to him on New Year's Eve, and the most complete of the ceremonies to him is held by the blacksmiths and the locksmiths.

782 326

On New Year's Eve the master of the house kills either a calf or a ram, and his wife kills a rooster for each member of the family and prepares a pie of wheat-flour and fresh cheese. The livers and hearts of all the slaughtered animals are roasted separately; for this, instead of a spit, a stick from a young nut-tree is used. When the food is ready

/53 cont./

782 and has been brought into the smithy, the blacksmith puts
326 all his instruments on the anvil; a brazier with coals is placed nearby and the whole family kneels down around the anvil. After taking off his bashlyk and his belt (as proof that he addresses Shasha with an open heart and mind), the smith lights a wax candle, throws incense on the coals of the brazier, and prays to Shasha to bless him and his family with good health and long life, and to make the instruments forged from iron do him good rather than harm. After all those present have pronounced "Amen" at the end of the prayer, the master of the house cuts pieces of the pie and of the organs roasted on the nut-wood spit and throws them on the brazier with the words: "Until that time when I am unable /54/ to feed with these little pieces all Shervashidzi and Anchabadzi, let no one in my family fall ill. I pray to you for this, Shasha, bringing to you a real sacrifice." The smith then cuts off just such little pieces from the other sacrifices and distributes them to all the members of the family, who eat them and wash them down with three swallows
[273] of wine. The host designates the wine for this repast immediately after the harvesting of the grapes and saves it in a separate jug called shĕsher gaphshi, buried in the smithy itself; under the fear of punishment by Shasha, no one dares to touch it, even in any extremity, before New Year's Eve, neither the host himself nor, all the more, one of the bystanders. Upon the completion of the praying, the prepared dishes are transferred to the house of the smith, where the neighbors gather and feast to the glory of Shasha until dawn.

782 Several princes also offer a prayer to Shasha on New
• 776 Year's Eve, in which case each of the persons present, having
565 been at one time dependent on these princes, brings a rooster. Shasha is one of those divinities called upon by the Abkhaz more often than others.

776 According to the understanding of the Abkhaz, the divinity whose name is called falsely immediately punishes the guilty one by those means or tools which are in the field of his specialty. Thus, for instance, one who has called

/54 cont,/

776 falsely the name of Aphi, who commands the thunderstorms, cannot be punished by means of firearms or side arms, which make up the specialty of Shasha, etc.

782 326 Oaths to Shasha are of two kinds: in the smithy and under the open sky. In the first instance, the smith, having placed the hammer on the anvil and crossed his hands on his breast, stands to one side of it, the one swearing the oath on the other side of the anvil, opposite the smith, and the one concerning whose affairs the oath is being sworn stands to the side. The one swearing the oath, having taken the hammer into his hands, says: "If I am guilty of that of which they accuse me, then may Shasha smash open my head on the anvil"; upon these words, he hits the anvil three times with the hammer, and the oath is considered sworn. In the second 782 instance, two sticks are driven into the ground, one opposite the other; on them are hung loaded rifles whose muzzles are trained on the space occupied by the one swearing the oath; those present stand to the side. The one swearing the oath pronounces, "If I said a lie, may Shasha shoot bullets through my head /55/ from these rifles," and he walks through the space between the rifles three times.

755 782 326 [787] At the first sign of sickness accompanied by headaches, the person who has taken a false oath asks his relatives to find out from a female fortune-teller the cause of his ailment. The fortune-teller, who has usually heard beforehand, from the blacksmith himself about everyone who has taken an oath, throws some beans and looks at the stars, and then indicates the cause of the sickness: a false oath sworn to Shasha on such and such a day, in connection with such and such a matter, and in such and such a smithy. One of the ailing person's relatives goes to the person concerning whose affairs the false oath was sworn and by gifts induces him to pray to Shasha to forgive the patient, promising, of course, that upon recovery the patient will give him complete satisfaction. Then they both go to the smithy where the oath was taken, and the

/55 cont./

755 sick man's accuser, taking off his belt to bear witness to the
782 sincerity of his address to Shasha, approaches the anvil and
326 utters a prayer in which he requests Shasha to deliver the guilty one from his ailment, with a pledge that after his recovery the sick man will come himself to beg for forgiveness from Shasha; then, leaving a piece of iron in the smithy, he goes to set the patient's mind at reast. If the sick man recovers, he satisfies the injured one and goes with him to the smithy, and, having put a small silver coin (no less than two rubles) on the anvil, thanks Shasha for his recovery; the ram, the bread, and the wine that he has brought with him are given to the blacksmith, from whom, after the prayer, he receives pieces of the ram's liver and heart; he sends these to his family as a token of Shasha's forgiveness. In company with his relatives, the injured party, and the blacksmith, he himself eats the food that was brought along in the blacksmith's house.

21.

The Prayer to Eyrig-aatsnykh

579 Eyrig-aatsnykh is the patron of stealing, plundering, and
782 robbery. Beyond the river Bzyb this deity is called
[776] Chugurukhnykh; all the Abkhaz setting out to steal among the Ubykh, Shapsug, and other mountain-dwellers used to
[778] bring offerings to Chugurukhnykh, whose altar, if this expression may be used here, /56/ was located on a cliff beyond the fortification of Gagra. Prayers to this god are offered only by those who practice the "arts" of which he is the patron. An offering of four cone-shaped loaves of bread is brought; a prayer is said over them, asking a blessing upon the enterprise and giving a promise to sacrifice something else to the god in case of success. The loaves of bread are taken along on the trip. The thank-offering consists of something of the stolen goods, and if a horse or a head of cattle is taken, the sacrifice consists of a lock of the stolen animal's hair;

/56 cont./

579 782 all this is hung on trees near the place where Eyrig-aatsnykh is believed to have his permanent abode.

22.

Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh

• 776 Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh is worshiped as the mightiest of the gods. Mt. Dudryuphsh is regarded as his abode. Those [778] who dare to climb this mountain are immediately punished with blindness; therefore prayers and sacrifices to this deity are offered at the foot of the mountain. As a deity, Anybs-nykha has no exclusive, professional field of authority, but he is worshiped as higher and mightier than all the other gods. [782] The arrangement of prayers and sacrifices to him is the same as to Sha-sha, with the difference that when an oath is taken in his name, the formula is "May Anybs-nykha send me blindness and every ailment . . ., "etc.

778 [823] Anybs-nykha's residence is under the exclusive supervision of the large Abkhaz family Ankhaë-Chichba. The Chichba have enjoyed this right for several generations; it is a source of great profit to them, since permission to bring sacrifices to this deity must be bought from them with presents. Not far from the top of Mt. Dudryuphsh, the actual abode of Anybs-nykha, a stone lies under an oak; on this stone the image of the Holy Virgin has been carved. All those who [782] take an oath must put a coin or something metal under this stone, and woe to him who is tempted to take anything away, even one little thing, from among the objects lying there!

23.

/57/ Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

782 [796] [262] On Christmas Eve in every family chickens are killed and four kvakvari (small loaves of bread stuffed with cheese)

/58 cont./

731 donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and
789 put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva
[539] dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins
[825] to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

25.

Saints

● 776 Independent of the general worship of all the deities dis-
778 cussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny,
[184] Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke
782 their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in
[796] fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.
[231] - On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

[766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

[767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D.; but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

[767 cont.]

776 good and bad. The Hammerers (Ašatsatšap'atsa) decide the fate of the newborn and write it on their foreheads (lakhintsara). As nature gods they worship the protector of cattle (Aĭt'ar), of goats (Džabran), of wild game (Ažvepša), of the earth (Adabna), of the rainbow (Atsakwa), and the protectress of the water (Dzlan dzahwas'), of the wind (P'šarn'a), of seeds (Dž'adž'a and Anap'anga), of dogs (Alĭškantra), of bees (Ananagund), and others. Just like the Osset, they have a protector of raiders (Eirig-ātsnykh) or Tšugurukhnykh) and one of smiths (Šyošu). The latter two, which are called upon very frequently, may be of a manistic type, derived from the belief in souls, as may be the protective spirit of the hearth (Ašara), the mother-goddess (Anana'a), and the "outer ones" (adnqa) (see p. 22). The Abkhaz attribute to the god of thunder (cf. p. 87) the same power and abilities as the Osset do to the holy Elias, but he is in part confused with the incomprehensible highest god (see p. 61) and is endowed with his abilities, and therefore also the shape of the local supreme god (Anybs-nykha-dudrüp'š), whose home is supposed to be the mountain Dudrüpsh at Lykhny. ---Hunters sacrifice a male goat or a ram to the god of game (Ažvepša) before the hunt, which begins after the vintage [768] and lasts until about the new year, so that he will grant them the desired prey from his herds. He gives them, however, only those animals that he and his daughter have already eaten and that he has restored to life by wrapping their bones in the skin after his meal. White animals are the herdsmen of Ažvepša and therefore must not be slain.

224 [782] [825]

776 Evil souls, similar to the western European vampires, tear the eyes, heart, liver, etc. out of the body and suck the milk from the cows. They have different powers and accordingly ride on frogs, mice, cats, or on foxes and wolves. Their chief (Roskipi) lives on the mountain Tabakona, where every year they must account for Mary's Assumption and must exhibit the plundered body-parts. For this reason the Abkhaz put up crosses during fasts, carry lights on their heads, and on the previous night stay up and shoot and sing. The evil souls can at the same time stay among men and on the mountain Tabakona, since

[788]

A [768 cont.]
776 only their secondary souls (ap'stštšada) wander about.

A Beside their old gods, the Abkhaz worship Christ as the
[177] Holy Teacher, Mary, and St. George as the protector of the villages Lykhny (Anan-Lykhnykh), Lsā or Pitzunda (Ana-Lsānykh),
[782] and Ylori (Tsminda-Giorgi), to whom a sheep is sacrificed every year, and a calf with notched ears is donated to the churches.

C The Cherkess, like the mountain Georgians, had sacred
778 groves and trees, where in former times the public gatherings were held, where raiders found refuge, and where the spoils of the hunt and war and sacrificial offerings were hung. Also individual springs and mountains, certain stone columns (cf. p. 63), and iron and stone crosses were supposed to have been considered sacred.

C The sacerdotal duties are performed by selected older
782 men; they lead the prayers and slaughter the sacrificial animals, sheep, lambs, goats, oxen, in the sacred groves before the cross, after having previously singed them on the neck with a pine-torch and poured millet-beer over them (cf. below in Section III, 1b: Cheremis [untranslated]). The head of the animal is hung up on a tree for the god, the priest receives the skin, and the meat
C is eaten by the believers, who entertain themselves on festival
[796] days with feasts, dancing, drinking, races, tournaments, and the like.

C [769] The gods of the Cherkess are almost the same as
776 those of the Abkhaz; they have a supreme being (T'ka) who reigns over the heavens; a god of the smiths (Tliebske), the protectors of agriculture (Yemikha, Skus'kha, Naokhatkha); the guardian of the forests (Mezitkh, Mezetkha), who rides on a boar with golden bristles and whose daughters milk the does; the lord of the bees (Merissa or Mereïme); three sisters who watch over domestic life, warriors in battle, and the traveler on his way; the god of the winds and waters (Seozeres), and others.

C At the beginning of spring, a three-day celebration is
796 held in honor of the last god, during which a dry pear-tree hung with garlands and other decorations, with a cheese at the top,

[770 cont.]

231 (atlar-tšoup'), they lay the animal on a quickly erected, three-
[782] meter-high framework or in a tree. The owner sacrifices an ox
and prays to be spared in the future; then they eat the meat of
the sacrificial animal, bread, and cheese, drink wine, and feast
766 the entire day. The Abkhaz proceed in the same way for a per-
son struck by lightning, but no one may weep lest the god be-
come angry (see p. 87).

789 During drought one also turns to Ap'i to send rain; an
[782] ox is sacrificed, and at the feast songs of thanks and praise
(antšva-rysšva) are sung in alternating chant. In order to evoke
rain magic similar to that customarily practiced among the
Balkan peoples is used (cf. also p. 64). The girls from the vil-
lage stricken with drought place a female doll embodying the
drought on a donkey and lead it to the river; here they put the
doll on a raft made of twigs and straw, ignite it, and allow it to
drift. They pull the donkey by force through the water, and if
he brays, there will be rain.

755 Various gods are called upon in case of illness. Ague,
[753] delirium, and the like accompanying serious illness are attributed
to the presence of the supreme god (Antsar mz) in the body of the
sufferer. In order to cure him, they sing and dance about him
and even force him to do the same; then they sacrifice bread
[782] and a goat or sheep in the vicinity of the house, during which
no woman may be present; an old man with a candle circles
the sick person and pleads with the god to forgive him and de-
liver him. He also prays afterwards to Michael-Gabriel.

In case of fever they look for help from the "Mother of
the Waters"; she lives, according to them, in a clear lake or
• [776] spring, is beautiful, has brown hair and laughing eyes, and likes
to live for a while with a man, like the mermaids. An old woman
touches the water with some object belonging to the feverish
person and begs the goddess to release him if she has enthralled
him. Then she ladles up a few drops of water on some alder-
leaves and holds them over the fire in the house so that the fever
may leave as quickly as the water on the leaves. Finally the
old woman moves away quickly, with the wish that the fever, too,

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswà*,* God.

Antswà is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswà*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *àntswa* and 'God'—*antswà*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1928, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archaeological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZvibzha

'mothers' and 'God', are often pronounced in the same manner."[1] 776
"During the study of the different religious beliefs and customs of [192]
the Abkhasians," he continues, "we came across the following phrase among others: *antswà* r-*məzəzə*—'the cause, guilt of God' (properly, 'the guilt or fault of gods,' N. Janashia). The roman r is the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural. . . . The above quoted construction—*antswà r-məzəzə*—could not have been arrived at unless the word *antswà* was used in the plural," justly remarks the author; "were it in the singular, we would have had *antswà i-məzəzə*."

Abkhasians regard the elements and manifestations of nature as rational beings. Each of these rational beings has his own gods, whom the orthodox Abkhasian serves honestly, in the light of his understanding. If the name of one, or more, of these gods has been forgotten by the people, he, the god, is simply called *inkhwə̀**—"his 'part', 'share' of mother," or they use the full form *intswakhwə̀*—"his part of God," while under the influence of Christianity—*inəkhakhwə̀*, in which *akhwə̀* denotes "part, share, dole" and *anə̀kha*—"icon."[2]

In Abkhasian conception, God is One, but He is of infinitely numerous "doles" or parts. Not only each manifestation of nature, but also each tribe, family, or individual, has his own part of God, just as each Christian has his guardian-angel. The Abkhaz says *səntswakhwə̀*—"my (*s*- is the pronominal characteristic of the first [193]
person singular) part of God"; *untswakhwə̀*—"thy (*u*- is the pronominal characteristic of the second person singular) part of God." And it should be noted that one may offend against not only one's own "part of God", but also against "the part of God" of one's neighbour, or relation, etc. . . .

This conception of the Deity as a multiform being appears to account for the fact that the word *antswà* is in the plural. Here I will [191]
note that such a conception evidently did not prevail among the Abkhasians only; its traces remain to this day even among the

[1] P. Dcharaia, *On the Relation of the Abkhasian lang. to the Japhetic* (in Russian) 104
in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics*, St. Pb., 1912, vol. iv, p. 65.

* The combination "*khw*" represents a sound uttered with one breath impulse. The underlined "*kh*" ("*kh*") constitutes actually a trigraph in which the digraph "*kh*" represents a guttural fricative equivalent to German *ach-laut*, and the *linea subscript* a hard diffusive glottal spirant, which is not to be identified with the palatal (front) "*h*", and which is represented elsewhere, independently, as "ħ"; the combination "*kh*" (= *kh* + ħ) is thus a deeper guttural, glottal, sound than the German *ach-laut*. The labial semi-vowel "*w*" represents the labialization of the preceding "*kh*". "*Khw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*kh*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet*, pp. 48 and 39; see also his *Abkhasian-Russian Dictionary*, Leningrad, 1926, pp. xxxv–xxxvi. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[2] I. Javakhishvili derives *anə̀kha* from the Georgian word *khati*, icon. May not *khati* be derived from the Abkhasian verb *akhat'ara*? *A-khə̀*, head, *at'ara*, to give, to set, to level the head. Or is it a mere consonance?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

776 Georgians. Thus, according to Iv. Gv. Gomelauri, the well-known
[171] pedagogue, in K'iziqi (Signakh district, in Kakhet'i) they say: *tchemi dsili ghmert'i; sheni dsili ghmert'i*, "my part of God," "thy part of God." A. Dsuladze, who is well acquainted with the life of the Gurian people, told me that similar expressions were also used in Guria.

Further, as the reader will see for himself, the word *an*, "mother" constitutes part of the names of a series of gods, and several of these names are of the feminine gender, as Dcharaia has also justly noticed. In this connection I should like to direct the attention of the reader to the names of two gods, namely, *jabràn* and *zhwabràn*.* Each of
[192] these words has in our opinion several connotations; *jabràn* is compounded of several words: *j* is the root from the word *a-j-ma*, a goat; *a-b*, father; *r* the pronominal characteristic of the third person plural; and *an*, mother. Thus *jabràn* denotes "father and mother of goats", i.e. "(fore)parents of goats", or "god of goats". In the same manner *zhwabràn* is compounded of *a-zhw*, a cow, and of the components just explained, so that the whole denotes "father and mother of cows", i.e. "(fore)parents of cows".[1] It seems to me that at the
[769] dawning of their religio-philosophical life, the Abkhasians evidently worshipped equally both their male and female ancestors. How strong is this ancestor-worship among the Abkhasians even to-day will be shown in my work *The Ancestor Cult*.

Thus, as is the case of Dcharaia, I think that the word *antswà* is derived from the word *an* in the plural. I also think that the name *antswà*, of the Supreme Being, arose from the deification of ancestors. At first it was evidently used with the plural termination, and in the feminine gender, and later, in the course of time, from "many mothers-gods" arose the One God *antswà*.[2] The changing of the gender of gods is often observed in the religions of the primitive peoples, and *antswà* therefore constitutes no exception.[3]

Antswà is One, but He is plural as to His parts. All the gods, of which we will speak below, are subject to and obey Him as the Supreme
[773] Being. In the tales, I was told, it is said that *antswà's* mother came from a Megrelian princely *gvari* of Mkheidze, the Abkhasian form of

104 * The combination *zhw* is to be uttered with one breath impulse; it represents a labialised variety of "*zh*" (= French "*j*"). Cf. "*tsw*", p. 118, n. *. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Such a morphological interpretation does not appear admissible, as the word *an*, if in this case it denotes "mother", is never combined with *ab*, father, but governs the first part of the compound word, *jab* and *zwhab*, which, judging from the relative infix *r*, is assumed to be plural. [Note by the Editor, *Khr. V.*]

[2] And not *àntswa*, as it should have sounded and does really sound "mothers". See above, pp. 118–19. [Ed., *Khris. Voc.*]

[3] If this supposition turns out to be justified, and the word *antswà* is not of Sumero-Babylono-Assyrian origin (from *An*, *Anu*), its significance as a term employed in the history of religious beliefs generally will be greatly increased.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Ad2 Vi bZh9

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswə* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*

1. *Jabrən*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nə̀hwa*, which is derived from *a-nə̀hwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nəhwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabrən*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashə̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswə̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərsa*, a combination of *adswə̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *ərsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'hwəs-isk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "h" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "hw" represents a labialized variety of "h". [Translator's Note.]

† The combination "*dsw*" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "*ds*". For this latter sound see p. 329 (*ə'*). [Translator's Note.]

[1] N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskii Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.
(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashə̀* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

796 When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a
[262] pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great
[539] god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwədù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *àămen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short
[197] on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megre-
[776] lianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours
[621] are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread
[252] is baked in rhododendron (*à-k'wazhwe*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

[776] This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

104 * The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*k'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*ky*", "*wy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotizes the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*k'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*k'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

[1] In Abkhasian *àtshyashwə*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *ant'ari*) *tsh'ebsə*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsh'ya*), good (*à-bsa*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *boeloba* (an abstract form of *boeli*, cowhouse) or *iloroba*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George
[171] of Ilori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhini-Ant'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhaz RI3
Adzvibzha

Àyt'ar!" etc. The dough is kneaded from the same leaven, only when calling to the cows they exclaim *wootsw*. Shrove Saturday is dedicated to *zhwabrən*.

3. *Anəkha-nəḥwa* (*Dopu-nəkha*)

Near Adzvibzha is a little village called Dopukət, where dwell the Dopua-s who are attendants (Geo. *me-khat-ur-i*) of the "icon"—*Dopu-nəkha*, revered by all the Adzvibzhaans and Dopukətans. This "icon" is known also as *shwəjən-nəkha*, i.e. Sujuna icon, under which is meant, no doubt, St. George of Sujuna in Megrelia. This "icon" is called *zhwarək'yə* by the wives of the Dpua-s, for the reason that the wives of Abkhasians have no right to call by name the eldest members of their husband's *gvari*, or his relations. D. I. Gulia thinks that the word *zhwarak'yə* is the same as the Georgian *zvarаki*, meaning sacrificial animal (the ancient Georgian *zuaraki* = *zowaraki*, Armenian *zowarak*).[1] In honour of this "icon" every Adzvibzhaan and Dopukətan family bakes, on the Shrove Sunday, a cake from millet flour (*sorghum*, in Geo. *ghomi*), which is offered as a gift to it. Prayers are said by the head of each family, and a handful of salt and a piece of wax candle are put aside for the "icon". The eldest of the Dopua goes round the houses and collects the salt and wax.

Mamsər Dopua told us: "At the present time our icon is in the village Sujuna."

4. *Àyt'ar-nəḥwa* (*khwazhwə-kərə*, in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərə*)

On the first Monday[2] of the Great Fast the ritual of supplication to Àyt'ar himself is observed. This supplication is otherwise called *khwazhwə-kərə* (in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərə*). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *ə-khwazhw*) is a special cake, sometimes coniform, and sometimes of round flattened shape. These cakes, which may be stuffed with cheese or not, but on this occasion are lenten, are invariably included in sacrificial offerings of the Abkhasians. They may be boiled, as on this occasion, or baked. *A-kərə* denotes "to hold". After it is called, in Abkhasian, the month of February, *khwazhwəkən-mzə* (*a-mza*, month, moon). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *ə-khwazhw*) denotes also rhododendron, the leaves of which are indispensable in the making of sacrificial maize-cakes.

[1] As a cult term this word is met with in the form ⴆⴁⴐⴓ in Sabaean (Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, ii, 24, 87, cf. p. 191, n. 179), see N. Marr, *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhasians and Alans*, etc. (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Pb., 1906, vol. xvi, p. 203. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The Megrelians call this Monday *t'ut'askhia bedniери*, lucky, or happy Monday, lit. the moon-day. With the Abkhasians, too, *Ayt'ar's* day is Monday; they pray to the moon exclusively on Mondays.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaħwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the [462] fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [784] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsàsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ħwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [352] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àdmen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nɔ̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə* [539] *—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number 776 801 seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaħwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *ħwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian [193] *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with [821] the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [171] included in both pleiades.

3:Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvlbzha

The Megrelians also know this septenary, *shk'vit'-ul-i*, in honour of which the majority of families let loose a cow with a pierced ear. Her milk is not used for food. The bullock is offered in sacrifice, while the heifer is reared. The well-known Pshav *Kviria* is, perhaps, related to Megrelian Àyt'ar. I have pointed out above that among the Megrelians the god of cattle-breeding is called *Zhini Ant'ar*. *Ant'ar* is the Abkhasian *Àyt'ar*, while *zhini*, in Megrelian, "high," "heavenly," is equivalent to Abkhasian *khikh*. The Abkhasians, however, appear to have split up *Zhini Ant'ar* into two gods, *Àyt'ar* and *Khikh*. They appeal for help to the latter in the spring, when the cattle are taken to the mountain pastures. They pray to him under the shadows of trees. On four pillarets are placed poles, which are covered with leaves of trees, particularly of the wild hazel tree, the oak, or yoke-elm. A cheese curd wrapped in chestnut tree bark is placed on this table (*ashwamkydt'*)* which is covered with greenery; on it is also placed *dtchamah'wa*, a kind of millet porridge, cooked with cheese. In front of it is also placed milk gruel. Women are not allowed to be present. The head of the family, standing with uncovered head in front of this green table, called *ashwamkydt'*, prays that *Khikh*, the great part of the great deity Àyt'ar, may increase his cattle and send all good things. While praying he spills a little of the gruel towards the sea and towards the mountains, uttering *wootsw*. The prayer over, he takes the cheese curd and passes over it cross-wise a hazel "knife", which is really a stick cut into a tapering, knife-like shape, after which he actually cuts the cheese curd with a real knife.[1] This ceremony of prayer is followed by a dinner, the remains of which are not cleared away. Three of the supports or legs of *ashwamkydt'* are cut off (each with one stroke), the fourth remains there untouched. It seems to me probable that the table itself received its name from this act of cutting. Megrelians also know this *ashwamkydt'*, which they call *sumkvat'* (*sumi keti*), "three sticks," derived, perhaps, from *sumkvat'*, in which case it would denote "three cuttings" (*kvat'* < *kvat'ua* = to cut, to fell), i.e. "cut with three strokes."[2]

The Georgian Mountaineers also have their *Anator-i*.

(c) *Alèshkintr* (*alèshintr*).

These cakes are also put aside. The prayer now takes three new

* The combination *shw* represents a labialized variety of "*sh*"; cf. "*shw*", p. 120, note *. In *ashwamkydt'* the "*sh*" is not only labialized, but also lingualized or lotised, which lingualisation is not, however, represented in the transcription. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] By using the wooden knife, the Abkhasian probably pays tribute to that very ancient time when his ancestors used that kind of knife.

[2] If the first part *shumu* represents the Megrelian word "three", one should keep in mind not the "K'art'lianised" form *sumi*, but the original, Tubal-Kainian *shumi*; see MARR, *From the Journeys to Somtia* (in Russian), in *Christ. Vostok*, ii, pp. 17–18. (Editor, *Christ. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVihZhq

1796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alèshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[202] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[168] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[116] In the opinion of the commission, *Alèshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[23] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight." [1]

[801] The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri, vàri, khəzò, jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*vàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khəzò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

1116 (*d*) *Àmza-nəhwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
1196 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

[104] * See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the pro/nuction of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ɣ" (the ancient Arabic *'ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[171] [1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Araïk* (cf. *Alèshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Areïa*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Àmza, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, guard over our men! Grant them beauty and strength!" Simultaneously the men-folk crowd around him, for the moon is the god of men; the women-folk stand at a distance. "Increase our cattle and all our weal! Burn out the eyes of the spell-binders, and the tongues of the evil-speakers! *Wootsw*, *Wootsw*!" the supplicant continues his incantation and, calling to the cattle, spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà* or *a-k'worpà*) now in the direction of the sea, now towards the mountains.

"The moon is a man, and the sun is a woman," say the Abkhasians.

I will now quote from my notes the following brief account of a very characteristic Abkhasian tale:

(1) "Seven very rich Abkhasian brothers had no sisters; whereat they were very aggrieved. Eventually, however, a sister was born, but from that moment the wealth of the brothers began to diminish; every night some invisible power drove away their cattle in herds. The youngest brother who was endowed with the gift of prescience (*ashàna*) said to the others: 'A demon has entered our house in the guise of our sister; if we do not kill him, our days and those of all in the whole district are numbered!' The brothers, however, would not listen to him. Thereupon he left his home, and travelled abroad, where he married a beautiful maiden-sun (*Àmra*). After several years, feeling home-sick, he set out to visit his brothers. Alas! what did he find? There was nobody left alive in the whole district except a mouse and his own sister-demon (the witch). She at once devoured his horse, and stepped aside to sharpen her teeth. On the advice of the mouse, the moon-brother, to save his life, took to his heels; he managed to inform his wife-sun of his misfortune, who hastened to deliver him. But the sister overtook her brother and began to devour him. By this time his wife Àmra had arrived. She pulled her husband, *Àmza*, towards her, but the demon pulled also; and so a deadlock ensued. *Antswà* decided the matter thus: he allowed the wife-sun to have her husband, the moon, for fifteen days, and the demon to have him for the remaining fifteen days of the month. And from that time began the phases of the moon. As soon as the moon becomes full it means that the demon has begun to devour Àmza, on which account the moon diminishes gradually; towards the end of Àmza's life his wife, full of love, comes to the rescue of her unfortunate husband, and as her caresses and care restore him to life the moon waxes again. When it is full the demon reappears and the story repeats itself!"

(2) "The Eclipse of the Moon. During the eclipse a monster, Atv (*Atwys*), falls upon the moon to devour it. In order to save their

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

539 [789] benefactor, the moon, the Abkhasians fire at the monster and thereby drive him away." [1]

(3) The Moon and the Sun. A beautiful Abkhasian widow woman had a son and a daughter, who often absented themselves from home for the whole day; they would go off early in the morning and return only late in the evening. No amount of coaxing or tenderness on the part of the mother sufficed to keep the children at home or stop them from indulging in their daily adventure, so she decided to shadow them. She found they were seated under the shadow of an ancient oak, in a thick forest, enjoying themselves in an agreeable pastime with the moon and the sun. Before them were all sorts of eatables. The mother, flying into a passion, flung fresh dung at the moon and the sun. The sun-sister, being a more fastidious creature, washed herself, but the less particular moon-brother did not do so, and hence arose the dark patches on the moon; the brother, the moon, and the sister, the sun,[2] then soared up to the sky for ever, while the widow and her children returned home."

821 Here I will also note that the Abkhasians always welcome the new moon by looking at its reflection through a mirror, or over a silver piece.

[753] A certain mainly infantile disease, similar to convulsions, is called by the Abkhasians *àmzakra*, i.e. "to be caught by the moon".

(*e*) *Àmra-nə̀ħwa*, Prayer to the Sun.

796 [776] When he has finished the invocation addressed to Àmza (the moon), the supplicant takes the sun-shaped cake, and, with the women surrounding him, he says: "Thou, Àmra, *Àyt'ar intswakhwədù*, the great part of the great *Àyt'ar*, grant warmth, and caress the women of our family! Increase our cattle," etc., and then spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà*) in the usual manner, uttering *wootsw*.

According to D. I. Gulià, in the village of Dchilou they use the form *Amera* instead of *Àmra*.

(*f*) *Anàp'a-nàga*.

[776] After that the supplicant takes *alaħwàra* (a large mortar) and, addressing himself to the god *Anàp'a-nàga*, says: "Thou, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, send us the warmth of thine eyes and of

[1] Exactly what *Atə̀wyə* denotes is difficult to explain. In connection with the above quoted tale, the etymology of this word may, however, perhaps elucidate its significance. *Atə̀* denotes the barn- or screech-owl; *wy* may be the root from the word *a-owyə̀* (man); consequently *atə̀wyə* may denote "man-owl". And by *atə̀wyə* is, perhaps, understood the sister devouring the brother-moon.

[2] Their gender is often confused: sometimes the moon and the sun are sisters or brothers, sometimes the moon is brother and the sun sister.

[3] I think the Georgian word *mizezi*, cause, is derived from the Abkhasian *amzəz*, cause (from *àmza*, moon). (It is doubtful! Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

thy heart! Grant us such a crop of maize that at its gathering we shall have to bend the stalks with a hook (Geo. *Kavi*), and cut them down with a bill!" *K'uarpa* (*a-k'wərpá*) is then spilled, and the cattle is called by shouting *wootsw*. *Anàp'a-nàga* is the harvest god. In my opinion the etymology of these words is as follows: *Ap'ará* denotes "to twist or twine" something (a rope, for example), as well as "to pass with difficulty through something", for instance, a maize or millet field, crowd, etc.; *nágara*—to carry: *inap'òo ingo*—carriest thou by forcing thy way, by pushing asunder.

There is also an evil spirit of the harvest called *Jaja*, but we will speak of her (she is a goddess) separately, as she is not a member of this septenary.

(*g*) *Atchshò-shyashyàna* (god of horses).

Finally, the supplicant takes the cake whose shape represents a horse (or three *à-khwazhwa*), and entreats (the god) *Atchshò shyashyàna* —the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, to increase his horses (donkeys and asses). Again *wootsw* and *ak'warpá*. The word *atchshò* denotes horse; *shwyashyàna* or *shashana* is incomprehensible.

With this ceremonial *Àyt'ar-nòhwa* ends.

Judging from what has already been said above, it is clear that *Àyt'ar* is the head of a whole pleiade of gods, each of whom constitute a special part of him; it is noteworthy that in every supplication addressed to any one of these gods, *Àyt'ar* is also invariably referred to as one whose part is the deity in question. The religio-philosophical mind of the Abkhasians has arranged the hierarchy of these gods in the following order:—

ÀYT'AR: JABRÀN, ZHWABRÀN, ALÀSHKINTR, ÀMZA, ÀMRA, ANÀP'A-NÀGA, AND ÀTCHSHÒ-SHYASHYÀNA.

Àyt'ar is one in seven parts. This conception of God in parts is prominently expressed in *Àyt'ar*.

(*h*) *Lòmilah* (*Nòmirah* or *Shòmirah*).

Àyt'ar-nòhwa ends with *Lòmilah*. What this word denotes is difficult to explain. It appears to denote the god of conjugal happiness of the youth.

On the same evening, after the conclusion of *Àyt'ar-nòhwa*, the young people, boys and girls, meet at one of their houses, and begin to predict their fortunes. It is a time of laughter and gaiety, and the young people enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. *A-khwakwàr* of usual size is prepared in great quantities; and also enough of a smaller size, extremely salt in flavour, to enable each participant to have three. In one of these small *akwakwàr* is placed a hazel chip, called *dnasp'adsw*, "stake of happiness." Each person is given three

3: Janashia 1-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *The Gathering of Medicinal Herbs*

On Maundy Thursday, young maidens, led by old women, go into a forest early before the dawn, to gather medicinal herbs. They must neither converse nor look back. When they dig out the herb, they throw salt into the soil, murmuring "*Àdgilə-dedop'al, bəhhwə bàl'eyt*, the Queen-Earth, we have returned to thee thy share". The following herbs are considered as particularly healing: (*a*) *ajmshyə-rshwəga*, *Arum albispatum*,[1] literally denoting: *ajmshyə*, eyebrow; *ashwəga*, "that with which they paint (a paint)"; it is used against diphtheria and scarlet fever; (*b*) *aziqyil* or *abgar lomha*, *Aristolochia pontica*[1] (birthwort); the second Abkhasian term denotes, literally, "jackal's ear," used against erysipelas (St. Anthony's fire); and (*c*) *ajaqwa*, veratrum, according to Tchubinov (Geo. *Kharis-dzira*). Having finished gathering, they return home in silence and without looking back.

Maundy Thursday is called by the Abkhasians *tchatchkhadəl*, derived, in all probability, from the Megrelian *tsashkha didi*, "the great Thursday."

5. *Jaja*[2]

On Maundy Thursday the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the goddess of fruitfulness (of husbandry and horticulture) called *Jaja*. For this occasion the Abkhasian women prepare all sorts of lenten dishes, taking care always to include a pumpkin. The dishes are placed outside the house, in a corn-field, the offering to *Jaja* being accompanied by a supplication as follows: "The great *Jaja*! We have done all that was required of us, and have made the customary offering. We therefore humbly entreat thee to show thy bounty towards us and grant us a good harvest in the field and in the kitchen garden!" As I have stated before, the Abkhasians have no set prayer formulas, and each prays as best he can.

As always, the offering is left for a few minutes wherever it was placed, and the supplicants stand before it, and watch with emotion how the spirit of the goddess invisibly satiates herself with the gifts of men! Needless to say they themselves consume the "remains".

As I have already remarked, there are two Abkhasian gods of fruitfulness: the god *Anàp'a-nàga* and the goddess *Jaja*.[3] *Jàja*, as imagined by an Abkhaz, is a broad-shouldered woman, of small stature. More than once Abkhasians have seen her wandering about the fields

[1] According to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden.

[2] It is of interest to elucidate what relation *Jaja* holds to Georgian *jojoba*; see I. Javakhishvili, *A History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian), p. 138.

[3] The relation of these two gods is difficult to determine; nor do we know the relation of *Jaja* to *Ayt'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

belonging to those who have failed to propitiate her, and muttering: "Corncobs (of Indian corn) of a digit size, corncobs of a digit size!" But if the owner of the field succeeds in frightening her and making her say *rdki, dzakə, rdki dzakə*, "of a cubit size," he will have a magnificent harvest.

On the day of *tchatchkhadə́l*, after the offering has been made to *Jaja*, the seeds are taken for the first time into the kitchen garden.

6. *Àmshap'*

Easter Day is celebrated with great solemnity by all the Abkhasians. It must be noted that the Abkhasians to-day have no notion whatever of the Christian conception of this day. Even the greeting, "Christ is risen," usual on this day, is wanting in the Abkhasian language. Everyone able to afford it has a new dress made for this day. To emphasize the poverty of a person the Abkhaz says, "Even for *Àmshap'* he could not get himself new clothes." This is almost the only day when an Abkhaz considers it necessary to send to church at least one of the members of his family. And the service in the church begins early enough to enable it to be finished by sunrise. Everyone is in haste to be the first to light a wax candle and to place a painted egg on the graves of their dead. The Muhammadan Abkhasians also follow this custom, although they do not light the candles. It is known that Abkhasians bury their dead near their homes, in the places favoured by the deceased, and the graves, therefore, are scattered about the village. Owing to this custom the whole village is illuminated on this day of *Àmshap'*.

On this day each family must slaughter some animal. And those of the Abkhasians who follow the established custom of Paschal offerings, immolate two or three animals according to what his obligation is, what he "owes"—this word denotes "obliged", "must", "owes".

(*a*) *Antswakhwə́* (or *Antswakhwa*).

This is a compound word, consisting of *Antswə́*, God, and (*a*)-*khwə́*, part, share, and denoting "share of God", "for God", more exactly "to render to God that which is due to Him", briefly "praying to God". On this day most of the Abkhasians reverently offer up their prayers to God; but not all of them. There are families who are "not obliged" to render to God "His share". I have already mentioned that the Abkhasian makes offerings only to those gods under whose power his parents or he himself had come, and thus had become his tributary, so to speak. Very often separate members of a family have, in addition to the general family guardian-gods, their own personal

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

guardians, whose power extends to his descendants, but not to those of his brothers or sisters. In the village of Adzvibzha almost everyone is obliged to carry out this " praying to God ", Christians as well as Muhammadans.

Every Abkhaz keeps in his cellar, in honour of " God ", a special pitcher filled with must of the very best grade. However great his need, an Abkhaz will not, for any consideration in the world, open this " sacrificial " pitcher until the celebration of the cult of " praying to God ".[1] Early in the morning, on returning from the church, the head of the family surrounded by the male members of his household, sacrifices a young he-goat over the " sacrificial " pitcher, and entreats " the great God to receive graciously the humble offering made by him in accordance with the instructions of his forefathers . . ." He humbly entreats the Great God " punish us not for our faults and trespasses ", etc. After this the meat of the immolated goat is boiled, and sacrificial wheat-cakes are baked. All this is taken down into the cellar, and placed in front of the sacrificial pitcher. The members of the family kneel down, while the head of the family reverently cleans and opens the pitcher, and, holding in his left hand a hazel stick upon which the heart and liver of the goat are transfixed, he prays *Antwsa-du* (to great God) that He grant him and his family a long and happy life. In his prayer he never fails to mention that they are performing the rite " in the manner they were taught by their fathers and grandfathers ". Afterwards he fills a glass with wine from the pitcher and pours it on the heart and liver and the sacrificial cakes; he then passes the latter, with the wine, three times over the heads of the supplicants who are kneeling down, and says: " Grant us the warmth of Thine eyes and of Thine heart! Protect us from all infirmities and sickness." Then follows again the libation of wine Now they all rise, turn round from right to left, and each places a piece of frankincense on burning coals. For a few minutes they all stand still humbly, while the great God " receives " their offerings, and then, with strict observation of order of seniority, a glass of wine and a small piece of the heart and liver is given to each of the participants. It should be noted that only the household members are allowed to partake of these sacrificial offerings. Even the married daughters of the family are treated as strangers, and they are not allowed to share in the offerings with their husbands and children. It is sinful even to think of the sale of the wine. In most of the families the female sex is generally forbidden to partake of this offering.

Thus do the Abkhasians perform annually the domestic offering to God of " His share ". But every three to five years each Abkhaz

[1] The same applies to other " sacrificial pitchers " referred to below.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

8. *Thursday of Easter Week*

(*dsatchɔ̀khur, mardyàni t'argyalàz*)

796 On the Thursday of Easter week the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice
[776] to *dsatchɔ̀khur, mardyàni t'argyalàz*. I do not know what the first word denotes. *Mardyàni* is the Megrelian *mardiani* (Geo. *madliani*) and denotes "beneficent", "blessed", "abundant"; while *t'argyalàz* is derived from the Georgian word *mt'avar-angelozi*, archangel; it is not clear, however, which of the archangels is meant. According to the explanation of the Commission, this "icon" punishes the offending family by causing the death, in particular, of children. "If there are children in the family, it does not touch the adults," commented the Commission. Sacrifice to this "icon" is always offered by an oak tree. On the Thursday, early in the morning, sacrificial cakes are baked, and the whole family repair to their oak, which is usually situated nearby within the enclosure. Everybody kneels,
[782] facing eastward, and the head of the family makes a bloodless offering consisting of *akwakwàr* and cakes, and entreats the great Dsatchkhur, the beneficent T'argialaz, to forgive them their trespasses, voluntary or involuntary. *Àămen* say the whole family. The oak tree is decorated
[824] with pieces of many coloured stuffs, some fastened with nails and
[778] some with wax. This oak is sacred and to fell, damage, or defile it is strictly forbidden.

On the same day, in the evening, but this time at home, the family
[780] make a blood offering to *T'argyalàz*. A fattened capon is immolated and cakes are again baked. Some families keep pitchers with "sacrificial wine" in his honour.

"In ancient times when people were not so depraved, T'argialaz procured for the day of offering a wild he-goat as his victim," Osman
[789] Kamkia informed me, "just as the Ilori 'icon' procured an ox. Now he no longer does so, for we are not worthy of his favours!" concluded the old man, sighing. The peasants Kamkia are *me-khat-ur-n-i* (Geo.), i.e. "attendants of the 'icon'." They keep a little cottage (*p'atskha*)
[778] where the "god" is supposed to dwell invisibly. A money-box is kept in the cottage, into which the faithful drop copper coins used exclusively for the purchase of sacrificial offerings.

An old Megrelian, whose name has unfortunately become effaced in my note-book, told me the following:—

778 "The all-powerful and miraculous icon, Dsatchkhur, was removed
789 by the Svans from the Salkhino church, and taken to Svanet'i, where it remained for a long time; in the end, however, moved by pity for the Megrelians, the icon returned of its own accord and alighted on an oak which stands on the picturesque hill of Salkhino. Near this

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Aàzvibzhq

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nəhwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nəhwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nəhwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nəhwa* (*anəhwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateypa, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Notes and Considerations concerning Chapter II

796 It is of great interest to determine which pagan cult approximates, under the name of *Àmshap'*, to Easter, the day of the Resurrection of Christ. I. Javakhishvili states in his well-known *History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian) that, according to Dubrovin, the Abkhasians called *Àmshap'* also *Mizitkhu*. In my opinion this is another form of the Abkhasian word *məzəkhwə*, i.e. " part of the moon," derived from *àmza*, moon, and *a-khwə*, dole, part, share. If this supposition is correct, *məzəkhwə* would denote " to give to the moon its share, part ", i.e. " praying to the moon." [1] It should be noted, however, that neither the members of the Commission nor anyone whom I questioned knew anything about this name of *Àmshap'*. It is to be assumed that this name was noted down from the lips of the Mountaineers among whom it had evidently been preserved. In further support of the possible close connection between *Àmshap'* [796] and the moon cult (and the " tree spirit ") there is also the fact that the most important role in these festivals is assigned to St. George of Ilori, to which saint, as Javakhishvili has proved in his aforementioned work, is assimilated the moon cult. The procuring by this saint of a bullock, its " purification " by leading it three times from the mountains to the sea and back, the dedication to him of the cow *adzàtwə*, and, finally, the Gurian name of *zhwabràn*, *Iloroba*, prove that St. George is closely connected with the Abkhasian pleiade. Here is yet another curious fact. In the village of Bandza there is a church dedicated to St. George and called Shourkari. There still exists here the following custom: On the Monday [2] following Low Sunday, after the domestic offering, the populace repair to the church, and on their way, singing *Kyrie eleison*, they uproot a tree without the use of any implement, carry it three times around the wall enclosing the church, and offer it to St. George. The tree is then left within the church enclosure until the next year when it is replaced by a fresh one. This, in my opinion, symbolizes the victory of St. George over the moon (= *t'ut'a* in Megrelian, and over the " tree "). [3] Such a custom also [191] prevails in the village Opshkvit'i, in Lower Imeret'i, where on the 23rd April the populace offers, in the same manner as at Bandza, a tree to St. George. [4]

796 Judging from the description of *The Supplication of the Leybaa*, 191 by the priest N. Pateyna, which has been preserved in its purest state,

[113] [1] Cf. N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, p. 133 (or its translation in this Journal, pp. 175–6.)

[2] " Monday " in Megrelian is *t'ut'ashkhà*, that is, the day of the moon (I. Kipshidze, op. cit., s.v. *dghe*). Noteworthy is Lamberti's description of the fear of the moon by the Megrelians.

[3] According to the information given me by Sh. P'aghava and El. Ot'khmezuri.

[4] *O-pshkvit'-i*, judging from its form, is of Megrelian origin.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibzhq

Wednesday was the day of the prayer to the tree spirit, with both the Abkhasians and the K'art'vels (and Megrels),[1] which is partly confirmed by the Megrelian name of this day, i.e. *jumashkha*; the latter consists of *juma* and *shkha* (Geo. *dghe*). What does the first component word denote? May it not be derived from the Abkhasian word *ajəma*, she-goat? The Pshavs have preserved the more salient *jumaghis jvari*, wherein *jumaghi* = *ajəmagh* denoting "goat-seed, goat-male", he-goat. This term may have been obtained from the custom of the Abkhasians of dedicating, or offering, exclusively, a goat to the tree spirit. This supposition finds further confirmation in the legend of Dsatchkhur, which procured exclusively for its festivals the wild goat (male).

One may also note the concordance between the names of some days in the Megrelian language, and the fact that it is just on these days that the cult is observed of those gods to whom these days are dedicated. Thus on the Monday (*t'ut'ashkha*) the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the moon; on the Wednesday (*jumashkha*) they observe the cult of the tree, and on the Tuesday (*t'akhashkha*) the cult of the mother-earth.[2]

III. NÀN-ḫWA

The Abkhasians call the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin (15th August) (*a*) *Nàn-ḫwa*.[3] They observe with great reverence both *Nàn-ḫwa* and the Lent of the Assumption. With *Nàn-ḫwa* are connected the following superstitions of the Abkhasians:—

(*a*) *Àwyəst'ad-ləkhəra* (Meg. *Dchindchat'oba*)

Abkhasians associate the night before the 1st August with increased activity on the part of evil spirits *dwyəst'ad*, demons; and

[1] N. Janashia evidently here uses *K'art'vel* as a generic term, including Megrels, but etymologically and linguistically such use of the term is definitely inadmissible. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The last two comparisons are made by the author, because for *jumashkha* he had also another etymology in connection with the Abkhasian *a-j*, oak, with which he identifies the Megrelian *ja*, tree; while in the first part (*t'akha-*) of the word *t'akhashkha*, he saw the Megrelian *dikha*, earth, soil. These doubtful etymologies have been eliminated. On the other hand, cf. *nerichi*, in I. Kipshidze's *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v., where this term is interpreted as "the basis of something, or the ground on which a house stands", and since the prayer dedicated to *nerichi*, or "master, lord" *nerichi*, as to a kind of deity, cannot be performed in a house with a wooden floor, I. Kipshidze concluded "that *nerichi* is god of the earth", in which supposition he was to a certain extent supported by definitions of the same word, given by lexicographers (S. S. Orbeliani: "the external side of the bottom"; Tchubinov (I): "bottom, the lower part of a vessel"; Tchub (II): "the lower part of the vessel, of the pitcher"). These materials N. Janashia supplements in his letter, dated 16th April, thus: "In Imeret'i *nerichi* denotes ceiling (see also V. Beridze, *Sitqvishona*, The Dictionary, s.v.), while in Megrelia, on the other hand, the rite is known under the name of *p'uḷesshi do nerichish khoama*, 'the praying of the foundation and ceiling' if not 'of the floor'." (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[3] In my opinion *Nən*(*an*) denotes mother, and *ḫwa*, "says" (from *aḫwara*, see above, p. 124, note 2), that is, "for the mother," "the mother's day."

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

they, therefore, take precautionary measures to avoid becoming victims of the malignant will of the evil spirits. Nothing is left outside the house, or in the courtyard; nobody sleeps out of doors. To safeguard themselves from evil spirits, the superstitious attach pieces of wax to their hair. Crosses are made from *a-lakwə̀mha* (Geo. *lekumkha*),[1] to which are appended acanthus leaves, and these are placed at the courtyard gates, house doors, the gates of the kitchen gardens and cornfields, the poultry and cow-houses, etc. Acanthus leaves are hung around the necks of the domestic animals. The Abkhaz is convinced that *dwyəst'ad* dare not approach these crosses, which are also a protection against evil eyes.

During this night the evil spirits go out to look for booty, under the leadership of their mother, *Arapàp* (Meg. *rokapi*). On this expedition they are joined by human beings in whom evil spirits have taken their abode. Some of these evil spirits ride wolves or cats, and devour all the animals left outside by their owners who had no time, or had forgotten to drive them into shelter.[2] All evil spirits without exception stir abroad during this night; they wander growling from village to village and through the forests. For this reason it is easy to find out and catch them, and with this object youths go into the woods, where they make a large fire, using the wood of *a-lakwə̀mha*. The youngsters hide behind the bushes and watch out to see if they can recognize those of their neighbours into whom an evil spirit has entered. It is believed that the demons never pass a bonfire without stopping and warming themselves a little by it. Often quarrels arise on this ground, with unpleasant consequences. This custom of seeking after the evil spirits, "demons," is called *Awyəst'ad lə̀khəra*, which denotes "the catching of the demon"; it is also known under the Megrelian name of *dchindchat'oba*. To this day an Abkhaz believes that an evil spirit can enter into, and remain in, a human body, particularly in that of an old woman.

The chief *dwyəst'ad* is the eldest son of the sister of God, and that is why He, being a blood relation, cannot destroy him, although he may frighten him off with thunder. Here it will be appropriate to quote the following popular story:—

"At the time of the partition of the work between God and the devil, the former, exercising the right of seniority,[3] suggested to the devil that they should divide the world between them. The latter

[1] The Russian *krushina*, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, that is, *alaternus* (R. Eristov mentions the plant *lshukha*, but he does not explain it. Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*).

[2] To safeguard an animal from wild beasts when he strays in the forest, they "bind the mouth" of the wild animals as follows: a pair of scissors is tied and a suitable prayer is uttered. "A sure remedy."

[3] The younger divides, and the elder chooses.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

agreed. During the night God caused the earth to be covered with luxuriant vegetation. Captivated by the beauty of vegetation the devil suggested to God that the best way to divide the world between them would be for one to have the earth and the other the vegetation. God took as his share the earth, and the devil received the vegetation. God then ordered him to remove his vegetation immediately. Only now did the devil realize his mistake, which, however, he rectified thus: he restored the vegetation to God, and in return for it he begged and obtained from Him the right to the souls of those who fall from the trees, having climbed them without first praying to God for their safety. . . ."

(b) *Barbanjia* (*dchiakokona*)

Before sunset on the 14th August the Abkhasian youths light, in their respective courtyards, a fire of flax straw (at present, owing to the lack of this straw, they use dry fern, etc.). Each person leaps thrice through the flame of this fire, shouting " I have burnt the evil spirit; I have burnt the evil spirit ". By so leaping through the flame an Abkhaz " purifies " himself of the evil spirit. After they have leapt three times through the flame each throws a piece of salt into the burning fire, and then, altogether, they begin to beat the fire with sticks to extinguish it, at the same time shouting the above quoted words. At the conclusion of the whole operation, the neighbours inform each other of their victory over the evil spirit by firing a gun. This manner of destroying the evil spirits is called " the burning of the demon " or *Barbanjia*. The denotation of the word is incomprehensible to me.[1]

(c) *Nân-ĥwa*

On the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, the " pure " (eldest) woman in the family prepares *a-ĉha* (" a round bread stuffed with cheese "), boils a cock, and leads the whole family into the kitchen garden. Here they all kneel in front of the blossoming cucumber vine, and the eldest woman makes offering to Nan, saying: " the great Nan (*Nân-du*)! We who offer thee this sacrifice, established by our ancestors, humbly entreat thee to have mercy upon our house: increase it like the stars in the sky! " etc. The kneeling family repeat with her, *Âmen*. But no one knows who *Nan* (*Anan*) is; they only know that she is a goddess of procreation of the human race. Of the Mother of God there is no knowledge whatever.

[1] The Georgian equivalent is *Dchiakokona*, which is observed on Ash-Wednesday. *Dchiakokona*, according to Tchubinov, denotes " the leaping through the fire on Wednesday of Passion-week ".

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

796 [969] On this day also they "lay the table", that is, prepare a dinner, for the souls of the deceased, unless the day happens to be one of abstinence, i.e. Wednesday or Friday. In the latter event the feast takes place on the following day.

(e) *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa*

On the same day of the Assumption is observed *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa* (cf. II (10)). The children are taken to a meadow where they are told to place their right legs against a tree. Each holding an *akwakwə̀r* in the right hand, they remain meekly in this position until the eldest in the family has addressed the prayer to "the spirit of the tree", entreating "the great part of the deity of the tree" to safeguard them from giddiness, from falling off the tree, and from injuries. The children must eat their *akwakwə̀r* without removing their legs from the tree.

(f) *Anàna-gùnda* (the goddess of bees)

796 231 This is both a spring and a summer feast.

In the spring, when the bees begin to hive, the eldest ("pure") woman of the family takes some hirse (Geo. *p'etvi*) and an egg, and [796] enters the apiary, where she passes the offerings three times over the hives, and prays to the goddess of the bees, *Anàna-gùnda*: "Submitting these as a pledge that the established offering will be made at the proper time, I humbly entreat thee, *Anàna-gùnda*, to be the guardian of our bees; safeguard them from all illnesses, multiply them, and grant them a good crop!" Hirse and the egg are hung over the apiary.

In the summer, between the 15th July and the end of August, before the gathering of the first honeycombs, more during August, on a Thursday or Saturday, the promised offering to the goddess [780] *Anàna-gùnda* is made. A large corncake (*a-mgal*), stuffed with cheese, is baked, and placed on one of the hives; also an egg. The family kneel in front of the offering, and the "pure" woman again invokes the mercy of *Anàna-gùnda* upon the honey bees, and says an improvised prayer. The family repeat a long drawn out *dàmen*.

After the ceremony, she divides the corncakes crosswise, into four parts, with two strokes of the knife; and cuts these into smaller pieces. The family sit down there and then and dine. They do not [621] forget the neighbours, sending a small piece each. The remains are placed in a basket and hung up in the apiary. Everybody passing by is obliged to enter the apiary and bless the honey bees and, scattering about a little hirse, eat a piece of corncake.

[178] In ancient times when the Abkhasians irreproachably observed all the rites, the gods were more merciful to them. Thus, the goddess

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

of the bees as a sign of her good disposition towards a given family placed an egg (the egg of *Anâna-gûnda*) in one of the hives. No matter how much honey they took from that hive, there would always be a plentiful supply of it.[1]

IV. K'IRSA

Christmas is one of the four chief holidays[2] of the year. Abkhasians call it *K'irsa* (Megr. *K'irse*), which denotes Christ. An Abkhaz considers it a great disgrace if he fails on this day to kill a goat or some other animal. On this day "the table is laid" also for the souls of ancestors.

(a) *Agwə-nə̀ĥwa*

For some families it is obligatory to make an offering early in the morning on this day to *Agwə-nə̀ĥwa*, for which *akwakwər* are baked. The supplicant entreats that *Agwə-nə̀ĥwa* grant them the warmth of his eyes and his heart. In translation the word denotes, "praying to heart." This "praying" is also known to the Gurians, under the name of "praying for the womb" (Geo. *Mutslis salotsavi*); Megrelians call it *Khatsitsi*.[3] According to I. Kipshidze, it is the New Year's Day breakfast.[4] In my opinion it is nothing more than a survival of the supplication described below.

(b) *Got'anùa* (*sharp'ə-nə̀ĥwa*)

Some *gvari*-s have preserved to this day the following custom. On Christmas Eve, the family go to bed very early; they rise, however, at midnight, and begin praying. Enough chickens are killed to provide one for every member of the family (blackbirds also may be used), or in their place a young goat; *akwakwər* baked. All this is offered to *Got'anùa*; the food is consumed immediately after the prayer is ended, and the remains, if any, are not left but burnt without fail. All return to bed. The dawn must find them asleep. In Megrelian *got'ənua* denotes morning-twilight, dawn, to grow light, to dawn, the Abkhasian equivalent of which is *sharp'-nə̀ĥwa*, the morning prayer; the Megrelian term, however, is more in use.

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family,

[1] *Anâna*, in my opinion, is derived from *an*, mother; *gûnda*, probably from *gundi*, a swarm, a collection of something.

[2] Namely, the New Year, Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas.

[3] *Khatsitsi—khatsetsi* is called also a bride. (Cf. I. Kipshidze, *Gram. of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. *khat'etsi*.) (Ed. *Khrist. Vostok.*)

[4] *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. (where is also a reference to the explanation of the same word in Georgian by V. Beridze, *Sitqvishena*, s.v., Ed. *Kh. V.*).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvlbzha

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family, being angry with her masters, took a portion of the dough for *akwakwar* destined for the " god " *Got'anùa*, and placing it in a scoop of bitter-gourd (*akwapey*, Geo. *kopo*), hid it in the loft. As usual the family went to bed after the ceremony. But unfortunately for them the offended *Got'anùa* soundly thrashed all of them, using for the purpose the very same scoop in which had been hidden the dough destined for himself. This *gvari* makes propitiatory offerings at the will of sorcerers to *Got'anùa* twice a year, during the night before Christmas and before the Assumption.

Got'anùa, under the name of *Okhvàmuri*, evidently spread throughout Megrelia during the missionaryship of Lamberti.[1]

V. Deities whose Cults have no Fixed Dates

1. *Et-nòkha—Àga-nòkha*

The sea, like other manifestations of nature, has its own " part of deity ", called *Àga-inkhwò* or *àga-intswakhwò*. An Abkhaz makes an offering to this deity when he goes to the sea coast for any considerable time. The sea deity is not to be trifled with ; if it is slighted it becomes turbulent, it surges, and punishes the unrespectful. Therefore even the children are forbidden to throw pebbles, or to spit into the sea. The wotship of this deity has been preserved in its purest form among the Bzib Abkhasians, namely among the peasantry of the Gudout (Gudaut) district, of the *gvari* of Amp'aràa. It has been described by A. Tch(ukbar), in *Sotrudnik Zakavkazskoy Missii* (" The Collabarator of the Transcaucasian Mission "), 1912, p. 373 sqq., where the deity *Et-nòkh-Àga-nòkha* is called *Et-nykh Ag-Nykh*. *Àga* denotes sea, *(a)nòkh*—" icon." But what does the word *Et* denote ?[2]

2. *Àshkha-intswakhwò* (god of mountains)

Mountains also have " their part of God " known under the name of *Àshkha-intswakhwò*. *Àshkha* denotes mountain ; *intswakhwò*, " his (of the male rational being) part of God." I have pointed out above that the Abkhaz often uses the word *nòkha* in the sense of god, which in the Christian faith is understood, or more correctly, translated, as icon. The god of mountains " governs " all the mountains and the beasts inhabiting them. Abkhaz shepherds make offerings to this god twice a year, in the spring when they drive the cattle to the mountains, and in the autumn when they drive them back. To him are subject also mountain game. In order to preserve the game from

[1] A. Lamberti, op. cit., pp. 148-9.

[2] This word manifests a consonance with the Assyro-Babylonian name of the god of the sea, *Ea*. Is this a mere coincidence ?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

their enemies, the god ordered the bird *aqaqab* to watch over them; the Megrelians who have the same belief, call this bird *kakabi*.[1] As soon as this bird sights at a distance a hunter or some other enemy, it soars high up into the sky, and by screeching warns the game of the approach of danger. That is why this bird is always found near the beasts.

The god of the mountains demands respect. He punishes severely those bold enough to bathe in clear, transparent mountain streams. The Abkhaz shepherds do not, therefore, bathe in these streams, being afraid of drawing upon themselves the displeasure of the god of the mountains: the nude body is said to defile the waters of the mountain spirit.

3. *Azhwèyp'shaă* (gods of beasts and hunting)[2]

Azhwèyp'shaă are gods of beasts and of hunting. They dwell in impassable forests, and lead an ordinary family life. To them are subjected all game, and without their will no one can shoot bird or beast. These gods kill for themselves some wild animal, boil and eat its meat; they wrap the bones in its skin and then revive the animal by striking it with a wand. Only after an animal has been resurrected in this way is a hunter granted the right to shoot it, and then only the particular hunter for whom the gods have destined it: no one else, try as much as he will, can kill it. Of this the Abkhasians are aware, and they employ the following characteristic greeting when they encounter a fellow hunter: *zp'sə-aakhəw yəzp'shər*, "Which is destined to die, that (animal) is waiting for thee!" the answer being, "For both of us is waiting!"

A few words may be said about the way in which Abkhasians divine the success or failure of their hunting on the day of the Assumption. Before starting out the hunter takes a sharp knife and repeatedly strikes the table, cutting nicks in it. Passing his palm over the table, he says: "Whether thou sayest fifteen, whether I say fifteen, whoever says fifteen (it will be) thirty, fifteen." If the nicks thus cut number exactly fifteen it is a good omen; the gods will reward him with game.

The Abkhasians learnt this method in the following manner. A hunter once followed a wild goat, but he could not shoot it. It led him into the thick of a wood, where he saw a huge cauldron, around which sat gods. They invited him to join them. Nearby stood a goat. They killed the latter and invited the hunter to partake of the meal. When the gods began to throw bones into the hide, the hunter concealed one of them, putting in its place a small stick (or a small knife,

[1] The word is consonant with the Georgian *Kakabi*, partridge.
[2] The term is construed as plural.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *Àbna-intswakhwà* (god of the woods)

The woods also have their "part of deity", *Àbna-intswakhwà*. 776 824
Àbna denotes wood, forest; *intswakhwà* we already know. When an Abkhaz enters a forest, or if he has to pass a night there, he prays to this deity for protection. I have, however, failed to collect more information about this god of the woods.

Àbna-wowyà

In ancient times the forests of Abkhasia were inhabited by *Àbna-wowyà*, "forest-people." *Àbna* denotes forest, and *a-wowyà*, man. 539
They were strong and courageous, but very ugly in appearance. Their bodies were covered with bristle-like hair. From their breasts projected a strange object, shaped like an axe and strong as steel, which served as a weapon; and by pressing an enemy to their breasts they could cut him into two. They preyed incessantly upon the people, who, however, in the long run, and with God's help, destroyed them. The last of them dwelt in an impassable forest, called Urak', near the village of Adzvibzha. In the same forest there lived also the courageous Khukhw Dchit'anàà, with his herd. Between Khukhw and this "forest-man" there was intense animosity. The ugly "forest-man" would come to Khukhw's hut every midnight, and inquire: "Dchit'anàà Khukhw,[1] art thou at home?" "Yes, I am. If thou art not an old woman come and fight me," responded the fearless Abkhaz. The "forest-man", however, would never agree to a single combat. Khukhw, tired at last of these childish pranks, resorted to a ruse. Placing a log in his bed, he went outside and hid behind a bush not far from the hut. At midnight the "forest-man" came as usual, and receiving no reply, he concluded that Khukhw was soundly asleep. Entering the hut and seeing, as he thought, the sleeping form of his enemy, he was about to aim a blow at the log, when the Abkhaz, who had crept in unawares, fired a shot at him. The "forest-man", although mortally wounded, managed to crawl away, and on the following morning Khukhw followed up the blood-stained footprints, and finding the dead body of his enemy, buried him with due honours. Khukhw appropriated the wealth of the last "forest-man", and also married his beautiful wife. . . .

5. *Atswaqwa*, the rainbow

The god of the rainbow is very vindictive; he soars high in the 776 824
clouds and punishes, either by death or the infliction of disease, all

[1] A peculiarity of the Abkhasian: the surname precedes the Christian name.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

who transgress against him. In order to avoid incurring the anger of this god, an Abkhaz will not draw water or wash himself when the rainbow is in the sky, and is generally careful about the use of water. Like any other god, *Àtswaqwa* may bestow the " warmth of his eyes and his heart ", in return for offerings and prayers. Whoever is affected by his wrath, grows icteritious, emaciated, to save his life he must, at the direction of the sorceresses, make the following offering to the rainbow god :—

On one of the Thursdays [1] the old (" pure ") women take the sick person to the river, pass (Geo. *shemoavleben*) around his head 4–5 yards of variegated chintz, and pray : " The great god ! Acknowledging his transgressions this sick person (the name is mentioned) has appeared before thee, and humbly entreats thee to accept this chintz as a pledge that he will perform the established offering at the proper time, at the direction of the sorceresses ! "

On the following Thursday he is taken again to the same river and place. Usually three women say the prayer, but there may be seven. Men, with the exception of the patient, are not allowed to be present at this ceremony. The sick person is dressed entirely in white. The eldest woman [2] kills a capon and a hen ; women carry out all the duties, preparing *ashwamkydt'*, " *ghomi* " (millet pudding), *akwakwàr*, and *atcha-gvazàl* (Geo. *ghvezeli*, an oblong bread), of each of which there must be seven of the usual, and seven of the very small size. All these are placed on *ashwamkydt'*, on which also burn seven wax candles. The prayer is said by the eldest woman. The patient kneels in front of the offering ; he is taken home immediately the ceremony is over, and he must not look back. The seven small *akwakwàr*, *atcha-gvazàl*, and seven small portions of *ghomi* (*abòst'a*—millet porridge), are thrown into the water ; they represent the share of the female slaves (*aM'op'hwòs*) of the rainbow god. Everything else is consumed by the women themselves ; the remains being thrown into the river, for nothing must be taken home.

Muhammadans must also burn candles at this offering. The candles are fixed on a kind of hoop made of grape vine. At the end of the ceremony the hoop with the burning candles is thrown into the river.

It should be noted that in some parts of the country this god is called *Àtswaqwa-òlia* (the Rainbow-Eliah). So at least he was called, according to the testimony of D. I. Gulia, by Javaz, the famous woman supplicant.

[1] Thursday in Megrelian is *tsashkhe*, the day of the sky. It is noteworthy that the Abkhasians perform usually on the day of the sky, the majority of rites that are seemingly connected with the sky, as in the case given.

[2] The Abkhasian women kill animals only on occasions of certain offerings.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

6. *Akhyə Zoshən*

The Abkhasians ascribe diseases generally to supernatural influences or gods, but some diseases have their own special gods. The god of small-pox, for example, is *Akhyə Zoshən* (the golden Zoskhan), and also his consort, the goddess *Khanıa Shkwəkwa* (Khania the white). How important are the gods of the Abkhasians may be judged from the following circumstance which took place during the spring of 1914 in one of the settlements of the village Jgerdi. Throughout the winter and spring of the year Abkhasia was in the grip of a severe epidemic of small-pox. In order to check the spread of the disease vaccinators were sent to the affected areas. The following account of what happened was described to me by P. Janashia, one of the vaccinators. A certain settlement, fearing that the gods might wreak vengeance upon them, refused to admit the vaccinators; they preferred to safeguard themselves against this terrible disease, *atswarp'shdzə* (small-pox), by the adoption of the gods. *Atswə* denotes skin, rind, and *ap'shdzə*, pretty, beautiful; the whole, in translation, denoting "that which decorates (beautifies) the skin".

By pooling their resources, the settlement raised enough money to buy a couple of snow-white goats and a sufficiency of provisions, and made an expedition into the forest. Here, amidst the quietude and peace of over-hanging leaves, a sumptuous feast was prepared for the divine guests. When everything was ready, and the victim had been placed, according to custom, on *ashwamkyadı'*, the head of the settlement said the prayer and made the offering to the gods. Nearby stood two bedsteads, adorned with silk bedclothes, on which sat two young women, an *aznauri* and a peasant woman; their naked breasts were covered with silk handkerchiefs. The whole assembly knelt down, while the head of the settlement implored the gods to accept their offering by kissing the breasts of the most beautiful women of the settlement, and thus become, in accordance with the ancestral custom, adopted sons of the settlement. Near the "foster-mothers of gods" stood two of the finest horses, one with a side saddle. The sumptuous feast followed the ceremony of adoption, and afterwards the people, holding the horses by the bridle, on which were to be riding the newly adopted gods, *Akhyə Zoshən* and *Khanıa Shkwəkwa*, escorted the precious guests to the accompaniment of song, far away from the settlement. Thus they "turned away", or warded off, the small-pox.

"You may not believe it," an Abkhaz from the settlement told me, "but this 'adoption' saved us from the small-pox; not one of us fell a victim to it. You, the learned, have caused our ruin by bringing down upon us the anger of the gods of our fathers," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

THE ABKHASIAN NAME OF THE SUPREME BEING

By Simon Janashia

Atranslation of the article published in Georgian in *Dselidsdeuli*—The Year Book, of the Georgian Philological Society, Tiflis, 1923–4, vol. i–ii, pp. 69–73.]

IT was Uslar who first observed that the Abkhasian name of the Supreme Being was in the plural.[1] He even quotes an example, i.e. *antswà dəuk'wa*,* the great God, lit. (*les*) *dieux grands*, in which the appearance of the adjective in the plural definitely testifies that, in the conception of the speaker, the ancient religious ideas—according to which God was not of one, but of many parts—were still in existence. The author remarks " only heathen Abkhasians say this ", the Chirstian and Muhammadan Abkhasians conceiving God quite definitely as the One, absolute Being.

Such an assertion was, perhaps, an excusable mistake on the part of the distinguished linguist, who was an orthodox Christian. It is impossible to divide the Abkhasians into such groups on the basis of their religious beliefs, despite the fact that formally they belong either to the Christian Church or to Islam. The example quoted by Uslar is probably one of those fortuitous discoveries whereby there suddenly emerges from the routine of ordinary usage a product of the national-spiritual creativeness belonging to the depths of the remote past.

Later, the same opinion (about the plural form) was put forward by Dcharaia[2] and Janashia.[3] The latter, however, thought that the word in question may have originated from the same *an*-root which in Abkhasian denotes the *mother*-notion.

Professor Marr shares only the first part of this view: he writes,[4] " . . . of great interest is the word *an*, god, which, in Abkhasian, appears usually as the plurale tantum *antswà*, God, lit. ' gods '."

In the summer of 1921, while in Abkhasia, in the village Adzvibzha (in Abzhua, the Kodor district), where I was sent by the Tiflis State University on a philological research study, I was able to collect certain data which threw more light on the question, as will be seen.

In the course of my research work, I was able to establish the validity of the formation of the word in question by the discovery

* For the pronunciation of *tsw* and *k'w*, see p. 118, n. *, and p. 131, n. *. (Translator's note.)

[1] Uslar, P. K., *The Abkhasian Language* (in Russian). Tiflis, 1887, p. 78.

[2] Dcharaia, P., *On the Relation of the Abkhasian Language to the Japhetic Languages*, in *Materials for Japhetic Linguistics* (in Russian), St. Petersburg, 1912, vol. iv, pp. 31–3.

[3] Janashia, N., *The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, in *The Christian East* (in Russian), St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue i, pp. 74–5. [See the English translation in this number, pp. 118–9. Ed.]

[4] Marr, N., *From a Linguistic Journey to Abkhasia* in *Isvestiya* (Bulletin) of the Imperial Academy of Sciences (in Russian), St. Pb., 1913, vol. vii, No. 6, p. 315.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
A2ZV16Zh9

of an analogical formation in a *sh*-root- (= creating, to create, whence the verbal noun *ashard*) word *ashatswà*, which represents an epithet of a deity, and is equivalent to Georgian *gamtcheni*, creator.[1] I have not heard this word used apart from its association with the word God. This root is usually used in its past-participle form. A popular Abkhasian expression is *antswà-hazshàz*, Creator God, but the following phrases are also in common use:—*ashatswà irshaz*, by the Creator (lit. creators') created (said of something very pleasing), and *ashatswà irmshaz*, by the Creator (lit., creators') not created (said of something unpleasing). In these examples *ashatswà* is understood to be in the plural, which is unmistakably borne out by the pronominal particle r (*i-r-shaz*, *i-r-mshaz*) which indicates the plurality of the subject (the determinative word in our examples).

It may, however, be argued that the phrases just quoted are composite, and that the particle indicated, a fossilized morphe which has lost its meaning. We will therefore quote another phrase, *nas ashatswà irshàma art'*, "Is it possible that the Creator (lit. creators) created these?" (it was said of the animals), in which *ashatswà* is directly represented as the subject in the plural. This word, and the notion conveyed by it, must have simultaneously undergone the same metamorphosis as the basic name itself, i.e., they must have lost first the intrinsic and then the formal meaning; it became a simple plurale tantum, for instance, in the widely used name for a kind of sacrificial animal, *ashatswà-dzatwə*, the Creator's (lit. creators') sacrificial animal, in which we should have had, in accordance with the rules of the Abkhasian compound word-formation, the form *ashatswà-rdzatwə*. . . .

It is clear that in this case the result of the acute conflict between old and new ideas, and in connection with it, between dead and living forms, is far less definite than in the case of *antswà* itself. The changes to which the latter has been subjected have been more rapid; but nevertheless, owing to language inertia, we find facts which reveal the original meaning of the process of word-formation. One such fact, quoted by Uslar, is given above. Of no less interest, in my opinion, is an example I found: the heroine of a story which I noted down, bears the following name, *antswà rt'əp'hà khànkwla*, that is "God (‖ gods)-their-daughter-Khakula" in other words, the god's daughter Khàkûla (Khàkûla being a girl's name). The same pronominal particle *r* (*r-t'əp'hà*) explicitly indicates here that for the remote ancestors of the speaker, God represented the union of numerous forces.[2]

[1] In Megrelian, *odabadi*. See Janashia, *The Abkhasian Cult and Mode of Life* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, St. Pb., 1916, vol. v, issue 3, p. 168. Also Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian) in *The Christian East*, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 132.

[2] See also Dcharaia, op. cit., p. 32.

4: Janashia I-5 (1921) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

Finally, it has already been noted[1] that this peculiar religious conception—in accordance with which, not only the supreme beings of the national pantheon, but even the elements (personified, of course), are forces of many parts, each one endowed with its own particular aspect, with its separate parts, must have been common to all the Georgian tribes proper. Thus, for instance, in the Summer of 1921, I heard, in the village Eredvi (in the district of Gori) the following expression :—*mashin gagvidsqra tchveni dsili ghmert'i*, "Then our part of god was angry with us"; and this year, in Tiflis, I overheard in the street :—*bnelashi ver vitsani, ai, ase venatsvale tchem dsil ghmert's*, "I did not recognize (him or it) in the dark, I swear by my part of God."

[1] Janashia, *The Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, p. 75. [English translation, p. 119. Ed.] Expressions such as "my part of God", "my part of the Icon", are quite common among the Abkhasians. Of interest, in this connection, is the curse *ùmtsahhu tswaat*, "may thy part of fire burn out." According to Mr. Marghania (Maan), the Shepherds in Abzhua, when grazing their sheep in the mountains, pray to the Marshania-s' part of God (*Marshyànaa rentswahhwe*, because the guardian-god of these mountains is supposed to be the god (or part of god) of the Marshania *gvari*.

/35 cont./

776 [774] affected man in his infant stage; no wonder the Abkhaz personifies and deifies all these, together with trees, woods, fields, etc.; he deifies some things because they bring him help, others because they do him harm. Accordingly, Abkhaz mythology created special protective deities for every activity /37/ of man, whether agriculture, industry, art, or herding. Some of these are, for instance: Aithar, the protector of cattle; Dzhadzha, god of sowing; Shasha, god of the smithy, and others. Many of these deities are female; for instance, the protector of the element of water, "mother of the water," is a woman; the earth itself is personified as a woman; there is also a "lady-wind"; the ancestor of cattle is female, as is the ancestor of nanny-goats; the god of sowing, Dzhadzha, and others are also female.

777 776 [774] Besides these deities, there are the Ashatsa-chaphatsa, the "creator" and "forger" gods. There are either two of them, or many. Under the influence of Christianity, they are presented in the form of angels. "Every soul" is born through Ashatsa-chaphatsa. They determine the future of the newborn child, his happiness and unhappiness, the length of his life and the hour of his death, and they make an inscription on his forehead (lakhints'ara /see foreign text/) concerning all this. The Abkhaz is certain that these inscriptions on the forehead exist and believes that anyone can confirm it with his own eyes. Incidentally, let us tell an Abkhaz tale that illustrates the inevitability of predestination or fate.

777 776 539 In the night two men set out to steal. On the way they were caught in a heavy rainstorm. They took refuge under the porch of a peasant's hut. Peeping in, they saw a group of women gathered, among them a woman in labor, who shortly afterwards gave birth to a girl. The "creators" and "forgers" did not hesitate to appear. One of them said, "The newborn girl shall become the wife of one of the thieves outside that are looking in. This shall be his fate." The second of the "creators" and "forgers" confirmed the words of the first. The thief, already middle-aged, said on hearing this, "I am not young even now, and she has just

/37 cont./

777 been born; God save me from such a marriage." And so he
776 planned to kill the newborn baby; when everyone in the
539 house had fallen asleep, he slipped quietly in, carried the child out, ripped open her belly, and threw it upon the flat roof of the hut. Then the two thieves went on their way. The child's wailing awakened the women, who found her, sewed up the wound with silk thread, and thus saved her from death. And no matter how hard the thief about whom the above-mentioned prophecy was made tried to find a wife, he was /38/ unsuccessful. Meanwhile the girl who he thought was dead reached marriageable age and one day somehow met the thief. He immediately fell in love with her and married her. Then it was shown how inevitably every predestination and decision made by the "creator-forgers" is fulfilled.

VII.

Prayers in Honor of the Deities

782 Prayer is the name given to those religious ceremonies and rites accompanied by sacrifices in honor of the gods which are performed according to a definite pattern set and sanctified from olden times.

[776] Each deity may independently show, within his sphere of activity, grace or wrath toward man; for instance, he may send sickness or misfortune on him or his cattle, etc.
[787] The Abkhaz easily determine by special signs whether the
[688] deities' anger is the result of deviations from the fixed pattern of the religious rites. To avert the wrath of the gods caused by omissions in prayers and sacrifices, they must repeat the offerings and complete whatever was omitted the first time; uncorrected omissions and mistakes in ritual weigh heavily as guilt felt toward the angry gods, even upon generations
[755] far removed from the sinners. If anyone falls ill in conse-
[753] quence of neglect in ritual toward one or another god, he must offer him a sacrifice in order to recover. If he is

/42 cont./

[755] [782] [789] candles, she lets it float down the stream, saying, "Amuse yourself with this one, instead of the sick person." Finally the old praying-woman passes her hand over the sick person's back, raises him, and having given him liberty ("azati") from his ailment, she sends him home, instructing him not to look around on his way back. The food brought to the stream is eaten on the spot by the participants in the ceremony; the remains from the table are thrown into the water and the dishes washed clean.

This prayer-ritual is considered the most sacred of all in Abkhazia, and the name of the rainbow, Atsaqva, is pronounced with great reverence. The Abkhaz claims that as [821] a consequence of this ceremony in the rainbow's honor the rain appears.

4.

/43/

[782] The Prayer-Ceremony in Honor of the Wind (Phsharnha)

A large loaf of bread with cheese is prepared, placed in a basket, and carried some distance from the house. Here [776] [821] a prayer is said to "Lady Wind" (a deity of female sex), in which she is asked to bring good and to carry off evil and to [777] deliver them from all sorts of misfortunes, etc. Then the middle part of the loaf is cut out, carried into the forest, and hung on an oak tree near the top. The next day, the one who first comes near the oak tree feasts on this offering.

5.

A Prayer in Honor of a Tree

[782] [824] On Assumption Day, vitushki are baked according to the number of men in the family; then the master of the house, with his household, approaches any kind of young tree and, putting his foot on it, prays, "Tree, give me your blessing and happiness ... that I may safely come down

/5 cont./

175 and Simon the Canaanite for Imeretia and Abkhazia. Although the latter fell victim here to heathens, the seeds of Christianity scattered by him did not die without a trace; they sprouted in the course of two to three centuries, and the heathen world shone forth with the light of Christian teaching. On the place where [778] Simon the Canaanite was killed, a temple was erected which attracts a multitude of pilgrims even now.

We also have information from the Greco-Roman authors concerning Christianity in Abkhazia and Georgia. For instance, Procopius, an author of the end of the sixth century, says: "Christianity has nowhere been preserved in such a pure form as in Iveria /Iberia/." Further: "Since the reign of Justinian Augustus, the customs of the Abkhaz have been noticeably mollified because of their adoption of Christianity. Justinian sent to them one of his eunuchs, Everrat, an Abkhaz by birth, with the object of stopping the princes from producing castrates. Justinian also built in the country of the Abkhaz a temple to the Mother of God and appointed priests and saw to it that the latter spread Christianity" (1).

1. Brosset, Histoire de la Géorgie, St. Petersburg, 1856, 4to, II, p. 240.

The temple of the Mother of God mentioned by Procopius is the famous temple of Bichvinta (Pitsunda), which from the earliest times has played a prominent role, not only in the religious life, but also in the political life of the Abkhaz. The Abkhazian eristav /governor of a province/ /6/ Leon II, taking advantage of Georgia's weakness after two Arab military invasions, made himself independent of the king of Georgia, Dzhuansher, and assumed the title of King of Abkhazia in 786. As the capital of his kingdom he selected Bichvinta, where the Catholicoi were already installed. The independence of the Abkhaz kingdom lasted two centuries in all. David the Great, King of Georgia, being childless, adopted Bagrat III (980-1014), born of the marriage of Gurgen, the heir to the Georgian throne, and Gurandukhta, the daughter of George II, King of Abkhazia.

/40 cont./

782 prescribes a prayer to the water, which is thought to be the
755 cause of the illness. Since the protectress of the waters,
[791] the "Mother of Water," is a woman, a sinless old woman is invited to the ceremony.

776 A large, clear, inaccessible fresh-water lake is thought
to be the residence of the "Mother of Water"; she may also
[778] dwell in a pure spring, untouched by anything unclean, such as a pig, etc. The "Mother of Water" sometimes comes out of her dwelling to the shore, and at that time anyone may see her. This is how the Abkhaz describe this "Mother of Water." She is a most beautiful, bewitching woman; her locks are incomparable and chestnut in color; her eyes are laughing. The Abkhaz who has been bewitched by her talks
753 to his comrades thus: "Eh, brothers, I have been vanquished
776 by the 'Mother of the Water,' and from now on I no longer
539 belong to your society. Recently I rode into a dense forest and saw a table spread there under a big oak; a mirror and a lighted candle stood nearby; the 'Mother of the Water' was sitting in front of the mirror, smiling at her own beauty and combing her long hair, which reached the ground. My arms fell to my sides from exhaustion; I could not take my eyes from that wonderful vision. When she saw me, she quickly arranged her hair and came towards me. I felt giddy... Without a word she raised all ten fingers, asking me, 'Are you willing to be my husband for ten years or not?' I shook my head, but she would not stop, and with the proper number of fingers raised, she offered me in turn nine, eight, seven years, and so on /41/ of marriage. As I kept on refusing, she finally raised her last little finger and fixed her gaze upon me. I immediately gave my consent..." (1).

1. "Etnograf. pis'ma iz Abkhazii /Ethnographical letters from Abkhazia/," Konst. Machavariani, Droeba, 1884-1885.

755
782 The "pure" old woman who was invited to the ceremony,

/55 cont./

[755] [782] [326] sick man's accuser, taking off his belt to bear witness to the sincerity of his address to Shasha, approaches the anvil and utters a prayer in which he requests Shasha to deliver the guilty one from his ailment, with a pledge that after his recovery the sick man will come himself to beg for forgiveness from Shasha; then, leaving a piece of iron in the smithy, he goes to set the patient's mind at reast. If the sick man recovers, he satisfies the injured one and goes with him to the smithy, and, having put a small silver coin (no less than two rubles) on the anvil, thanks Shasha for his recovery; the ram, the bread, and the wine that he has brought with him are given to the blacksmith, from whom, after the prayer, he receives pieces of the ram's liver and heart; he sends these to his family as a token of Shasha's forgiveness. In company with his relatives, the injured party, and the blacksmith, he himself eats the food that was brought along in the blacksmith's house.

21.

The Prayer to Eyrig-aatsnykh

[679] [782] [776] [778] Eyrig-aatsny'kh is the patron of stealing, plundering, and robbery. Beyond the river Bzyb this deity is called Chugurukhnykh; all the Abkhaz setting out to steal among the Ubykh, Shapsug, and other mountain-dwellers used to bring offerings to Chugurukhnykh, whose altar, if this expression may be used here, /56/ was located on a cliff beyond the fortification of Gagra. Prayers to this god are offered only by those who practice the "arts" of which he is the patron. An offering of four cone-shaped loaves of bread is brought; a prayer is said over them, asking a blessing upon the enterprise and giving a promise to sacrifice something else to the god in case of success. The loaves of bread are taken along on the trip. The thank-offering consists of something of the stolen goods, and if a horse or a head of cattle is taken, the sacrifice consists of a lock of the stolen animal's hair;

/56 cont./

579 782 all this is hung on trees near the place where Eyrig-aatsnykh is believed to have his permanent abode.

22.

Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh

776 Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh is worshiped as the mightiest of the gods. Mt. Dudryuphsh is regarded as his abode. Those [778] who dare to climb this mountain are immediately punished with blindness; therefore prayers and sacrifices to this deity are offered at the foot of the mountain. As a deity, Anybs-nykha has no exclusive, professional field of authority, but he is worshiped as higher and mightier than all the other gods. [782] The arrangement of prayers and sacrifices to him is the same as to Sha-sha, with the difference that when an oath is taken in his name, the formula is "May Anybs-nykha send me blindness and every ailment . . . ," etc.

778 [823] Anybs-nykha's residence is under the exclusive supervision of the large Abkhaz family Ankhaë-Chichba. The Chichba have enjoyed this right for several generations; it is a source of great profit to them, since permission to bring sacrifices to this deity must be bought from them with presents. Not far from the top of Mt. Dudryuphsh, the actual abode of Anybs-nykha, a stone lies under an oak; on this stone the image of the Holy Virgin has been carved. All those who [782] take an oath must put a coin or something metal under this stone, and woe to him who is tempted to take anything away, even one little thing, from among the objects lying there!

23.

/57/ Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

782 [796] [262] On Christmas Eve in every family chickens are killed and four kvakvari (small loaves of bread stuffed with cheese)

/58 cont./-

[731] [789] donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva [539] dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins [825] to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

25.

Saints

[776] [778] [184] Independent of the general worship of all the deities discussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny, Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke [782] [796] their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.

[231] On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

/58 cont./

782 heifer is selected from the herd, and in the evening it is brought
231 into the house where the family that is invoking the church's grace has its permanent residence. A supper is prepared, consisting of cooked or roast mutton, and the whole family washes and puts on clean linen. The head of the family takes a wax candle in one hand and in the other the rope tied around the calf's neck; he addresses the /59/ cathedral with a prayer for his protection and that of his family; he states that the calf will be dedicated to the church and that all its male offspring will be sacrificed to it, and that, instead of heifers, rams will be sacrificed. After this prayer an incision is made in the calf's ear; from this time on it is considered inviolable and cannot be used for food. On the day of its dedication to the cathedral the calf must spend the night in the house with the family.

782 If an inhabitant of one of the three above-mentioned
778 villages moves away, he is obliged to bring an offering each year to the cathedral in the village of his birth. Girls from these villages who marry inhabitants of other villages are not exempt from this rule. They as well as their children are still regarded as under the protection of the cathedrals of Lykhny, Pitsunda, or Ilori and are therefore obliged to offer sacrifices to them.

M. Dzhanashvili

539 /A supplement on pp. 60-64, containing Abkhaz sayings and proverbs, is omitted in the translation; see foreign text./

[766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

[767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

guardians, whose power extends to his descendants, but not to those of his brothers or sisters. In the village of Adzvibzha almost everyone is obliged to carry out this " praying to God ", Christians as well as Muhammadans.

Every Abkhaz keeps in his cellar, in honour of " God ", a special pitcher filled with must of the very best grade. However great his need, an Abkhaz will not, for any consideration in the world, open this " sacrificial " pitcher until the celebration of the cult of " praying to God ".[1] Early in the morning, on returning from the church, the head of the family surrounded by the male members of his household, sacrifices a young he-goat over the " sacrificial " pitcher, and entreats " the great God to receive graciously the humble offering made by him in accordance with the instructions of his forefathers . . ." He humbly entreats the Great God " punish us not for our faults and trespasses ", etc. After this the meat of the immolated goat is boiled, and sacrificial wheat-cakes are baked. All this is taken down into the cellar, and placed in front of the sacrificial pitcher. The members of the family kneel down, while the head of the family reverently cleans and opens the pitcher, and, holding in his left hand a hazel stick upon which the heart and liver of the goat are transfixed, he prays *Antwsa-du* (to great God) that He grant him and his family a long and happy life. In his prayer he never fails to mention that they are performing the rite " in the manner they were taught by their fathers and grandfathers ". Afterwards he fills a glass with wine from the pitcher and pours it on the heart and liver and the sacrificial cakes; he then passes the latter, with the wine, three times over the heads of the supplicants who are kneeling down, and says: " Grant us the warmth of Thine eyes and of Thine heart! Protect us from all infirmities and sickness." Then follows again the libation of wine Now they all rise, turn round from right to left, and each places a piece of frankincense on burning coals. For a few minutes they all stand still humbly, while the great God " receives " their offerings, and then, with strict observation of order of seniority, a glass of wine and a small piece of the heart and liver is given to each of the participants. It should be noted that only the household members are allowed to partake of these sacrificial offerings. Even the married daughters of the family are treated as strangers, and they are not allowed to share in the offerings with their husbands and children. It is sinful even to think of the sale of the wine. In most of the families the female sex is generally forbidden to partake of this offering.

Thus do the Abkhasians perform annually the domestic offering to God of " His share ". But every three to five years each Abkhaz

[1] The same applies to other " sacrificial pitchers " referred to below.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 · RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

is obliged to present "His share" (offering) to God, in a forest, for which purpose a clearing is chosen under the shadow of a tree, oak or yoke-elm. Here is offered usually a castrated goat the age of which is equal to the number of years since the Abkhaz last prayed in the forest. Women are not allowed to take part in this rite, although they help to prepare the sacrificial cakes. The prayer is said by the elder of the *gvari*, who receives the hide of the immolated animal. The offering takes place in front of *ashwamkyàt'* (described above). The prayer ceremonial is the same as in the case of the domestic offering, although the pitcher of wine kept in the cellar is not used; for the purpose of the oblation a little wine is brought in a smaller pitcher. All the men in the neighbourhood participate in the ceremony, and when it is over they seat themselves on the grass; herbage is placed in front of them, and on this is served the dinner. A small piece of the heart and liver of the immolated animal is given to each of the participants. All the sacrificial food must be consumed on the spot; nothing may be taken home. The horns of the victim are hung high above the *ashwamkyàt'* and left there. Three legs of *ashwamkyàt'* are then cut, and the assembly disperses.

Some families dedicate to *Antswakhwà* cows which are let loose with perforated ears (see above, p. 125); these cows are called *adzatwà*, which is difficult to translate; it apparently denotes "pledge", "security". Bullocks born of these cows are offered in sacrifice in place of castrated goats.

(*b*) *Aylòr-nàkha.*

On the same day, simultaneously with *Antswakhwà*, a sacrifice is offered to *Aylòr-nàkha* (*Ilòr-nàkha*). The ceremony of offering the sacrifice is exactly similar to that described above. There is the same "wine pitcher", goat, cakes, and the same manner of praying. Also, at certain intervals, the sacrifice is made in the woods, in the manner described above. Many keep *adzatw* cows in honour of the Ilori icon. The only difference being that women have a freer access to these offerings than to *Antswakhwà*. Here I will note that if the pitcher for the "sacrificial wine" becomes in any way damaged (even if only slightly chipped), a new one, larger and dearer, must be substituted without fail. This is a general rule for all pitchers of this kind.

Aylòr-nàkha (*Ilòr-nàkha*) denotes the "icon of Ilori". This appears to be the same icon of St. George, which is kept in the small, walled-in church of the village of Ilori. This village is situated on the seashore, three miles from Otchemtchire. What is this Ilori icon? Which saint does it represent? For what is this saint remarkable? The contemporary Abkhaz has no notion whatever. The masses do not know to this day that it is the image of St. George. All they know

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

778 is that the Ilori " icon " is omnipotent, and they, therefore, try hard not to incur its wrath. It is inflexibly just and punishes harshly those who deviate from the law; it is a goddess of equity, as it were; a 778 kind of Themis, and in the practical life of the southern Abkhasians 622 and of the Samurzaqanoans, there is, therefore, no " saint ", no 690 " icon ", no deity equal to the Ilori " icon "; it determines finally and irrevocably all matters, whether civil or criminal, which the crown court has not been able to settle to the satisfaction of the popular idea of fair play. Even in the case of matters upon which judgment has been passed by crown courts, but where the decision has not satisfied the disputing parties, appeal is made to its tribunal. The trial is conducted as follows: A kind of arbitration court is set up which imposes upon 789 the accused the obligation to take a propitiatory oath before the Ilori " icon ". If the matter is unimportant it is determined by a village tribunal which provides one or two co-swearers; but if the matter is serious (insult to one's honour, murder, etc.) the representatives of the parties participate in the trial with the judges. " Swearing in " follows, but the number of co-swearers increases; thus, for instance, 1–2 *t'avadi-s*, 2–3 *aznauri-s*, 5–6 peasants, 1–2 namesakes, 1–2 maternal relations, 1–2 relations of the female line of the *gvari*, etc., are frequently appointed as co-swearers. The oath is administered on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*. The accused swears before the icon that he is innocent, the co-swearers confirm his declaration, and there the matter ends. If the accused is unable to take the oath, he submits obediently to the punishment imposed upon him. From the day of the taking of the oath onwards the plaintiff breaks off all relationship with the defendant and his co-swearers. " The icon is between us (parts, separates us)," says the orthodox Abkhaz. It is impossible to evade this custom; it is an Abkhasian's profound conviction that infringement of this custom (the re-establishment of relationship), as also 696 a false oath, will not pass unpunished; the " icon " punishes with 653 sickness and even with death, if the accused does not come to his senses in time and confess himself in the wrong. At the death of all the members of the guilty family, the wrath of the " icon " recoils on the plaintiff. To avert the chastisement of the " icon ", as of Abkhasian gods in general, the guilty person must pray and make offerings to the " icon "; he must also compensate his opponent's material losses and obtain the latter's consent thereto; they both set out for Ilori with gifts, prescribed by sorceresses, and they pray there to the " icon " for forgiveness of their sins; they bring goats, bullocks, and money. This is called the reciprocal forgiveness-prayer (*eyba-nə̀khwara*). From this day normal relations are restored between the parties. If one of the parties does not agree to make peace, the other party can *akhə-dchəkhə̀ra*, " buy back his head," i.e. redeem

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

himself, by placing before the "icon" also the amount he was to pay to the opponent.

Muhammadans also take the propitiatory oath at Ilori, together with the Christians.[1]

There are many stories current about the power of the Ilori "icon" to work miracles. I learned one of them from the lips of Biram Tkhazou and Seyt Zhania.

"In ancient times the Ilori 'icon' determined all the disputes of human mortals in the following manner. High up in the centre of the church, hung the golden scales of Justice. Under these scales stood the suitors, praying zealously to the Ilori 'icon', who inclined the scale over the head of the righteous. Knowing this, Abkhasians would not venture to break the law or wrong one another; peace and happiness reigned upon the earth. But men are cunning; an impious Abkhaz decided to deceive the great Ilori 'icon'. He owed a neighbour of his a hundred *manat'i* (= rubles) which he would not pay. The creditor complained. They both went to Ilori. When they appeared before the 'icon', the debtor handed to his creditor his staff which contained the hundred *manat'i*. The scale inclined towards the creditor, thus acquitting him of the charge. He took back his staff and left the church. The Ilori 'icon' was 'offended' and because of this fraudulence on the part of one Abkhaz it punished the entire people: the 'icon' took the scales of Justice to heaven for ever."

In ancient times the Ilori "icon" provided oxen for itself on the eve of the wake festival. The Commission assured me that eye-witnesses of this miracle were still living in Abkhasia, but none knew their names. As this providing of the oxen is described by A. Lamberti in the manner in which the Abkhasians relate it to-day, I will quote the description from his work.[2]

"On November 20th[3] they celebrate St. George's Day. A superstition prevails among the people that this celebrated martyr, on this day, procures for himself an ox from the neighbourhood and brings it by night into the Ilori Church dedicated to him. This church is held in great esteem, not only by all the Megrels, but by the neighbouring peoples also. Therefore it is very rich in gold and silver[4]—the icons are all made of these metals and are adorned, too, with precious stones; and even the doors are mounted in thick sheets of silver. So revered is this church by all the people, that, although situated

[1] In Northern Abkhasia *Dadwsp'sh* is endowed with a similar power.

[2] A. Lamberti lived as a missionary for eighteen years in Megrelia (1635–1653), and, according to him (and also to other sources), the present-day southern Abkhasia (Abzhua) constituted then part of Megrelia, the northern boundary being the River Kodor.

[3] The 10th of our (old) style.—N.J.

[4] At the present time, too, it is the wealthiest and the most influential of all the churches of Abkhasia.—N.J.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzhq

[189 539 [118] in a distant country place and near the sea-coast, thieves have never entered there, nor has any enemy ship raided it or despoiled it of its wealth. Indeed, so highly is this saint (the Ilori 'icon') honoured, that not only would the valuable contents of the church not be stolen, but, even if precious stones were scattered *outside* the church, in its vicinity, no one would touch them. (It is the same even to-day, N.J.) In addition to the local population, this saint is also feared by the Abkhazes,[1] and even by the Turks, deprived though they are of the light of Christian religion. They all worship, and fear, this sacred object (the 'icon', N.J.) . . .

"On November 20th, the Prince (of Megrelia, N.J.) goes to the Ilori Church accompanied by his court officials, nobles, and the people of Odishi (i.e. Megrelia), to participate in the feast of the 'ox'. Not only do the Odishians go there on that day, but also the Abkhazes and Svans, in great numbers. The church is enclosed in stone walls [346] about the height of fifteen spans. At its entrance are large gates surmounted by a beautiful campanile containing many bells. On the eve of the feast, in the dusk of the evening, the Prince, accompanied by a large retinue of bishops, princes, and nobles, rides up to these gates, orders them to be locked, then seals the keyhole with his own seal and returns home. The following morning, before dawn, the Prince, accompanied by the same retinue, again rides up to the gates. When they have assured themselves that the seal has not been tampered with, the Prince removes the seal and opens the gates. Within the Church walls, the ox is found. At the sight of this miracle, the people, with great fervour, offer up their thanks to St. George, and the church bells ring out the glad tidings of the miracle all over the country-side. Everyone is firmly convinced that St. George himself provided the ox and led it with his own hands into the enclosure. Also, it is said, the saint leads the ox thrice from the mountains to the sea and back, and offers the ox, thus sanctified, to the people as a gift . . .

"A long time ago, so it is said, an unbeliever (the Abkhazes say that he was a Muslim from Trebizond, N.J.) came here from a country many hundreds of miles away from Odishi. After witnessing the miracle and how the people celebrated the occasion, this obstinate man not only disbelieved, but began to mock the Christians, telling them that they were light-minded and foolish enough to believe anything. In spite of his attitude, the people tried to persuade him to embrace the true Faith of Christ, and unanimously affirmed that all the miracles of St. George were really true. 'Very well, then,' said he, 'I will do this. At my home, two hundred miles away, I have an

[1] In Ilori the Megrelian language prevails to this day; many, however, know Abkhasian also.—N.J.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

ox of a certain colour. If the miracles you talk so much about are true, it should be an easy matter for St. George to bring my ox into this church to-night; then, certainly, I will gladly embrace your Faith.' The condition was accepted. On the following morning, early, on opening the gates, there was found within the enclosure an ox which the unbeliever recognized as his own. Thus he was convinced of his error, and embraced the Christian Faith."[1]

(c) *Indl-qwùba.*

The *T'avadi*-s Marshania, and all those Abkhasians who descended from the mountains (Dsabalaa, Dalaa, Pskhvu, etc.), offer sacrifices (a ram, without fail) in exactly the same manner to a sanctity, *Indl-qwùba*, instead of to the Ilori "icon". I could obtain no information of any kind about this "icon". Everybody I questioned gave the same answer: *Indl-qwùba* is equal in power to *Dədərəp'sh* and the Ilori "icon".

These offerings are performed early in the morning, and serve as breakfasts. Every Abkhaz slaughters some animal for the meal (the favourite one is a castrated goat), it is often prepared on the Saturday. They also pay the customary Paschal visits. After the midday sacrificial meal they all go to the public square, where they indulge in games, chiefly football. During Easter week they also organize horse racing, the most popular sport of the Abkhasians.

7. *The Second Day of Easter*

This is a commemoration day. A variety of dishes are prepared, all of which are placed on a table by an open window. The eldest of the family, holding a candle and a glass of wine in his hands, prays to the souls of deceased relatives that they grant his family peace and happiness. Then follows the pouring of wine on the meat and wheat dishes. The whole family stand behind the supplicant. After the prayer each member approaches, places a piece of frankincense on burning embers, and pours wine on the food. Here stands too a smoking pipe. All remain seated in silence, in order that the souls of the deceased ancestors may eat in peace.[2]

The Abkhasian, as has already been stated, have no Paschal greeting such as "Christ is risen". They welcome each other with a kiss, saying: "May God grant us that we meet again next year," to which the other replies: "And for a hundred years."

[1] Quoted from the Russian and Georgian translation of A. Lamberti's *Relatione della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia nella quelle si tratta dell'Origine, costumi e Costi naturali di quei Paesi*. Published in Naples, 1654.

[2] This rite will be described in detail in my work *The Cult of the Ancestors*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzh9

8. *Thursday of Easter Week*

(*dsatchòkhur, mardyàni t'argyalàz*)

796 On the Thursday of Easter week the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice [796] to *dsatchòkhur, mardyàni t'argyalàz*. I do not know what the first word denotes. *Mardyàni* is the Megrelian *mardiani* (Geo. *madliani*) and denotes "beneficent", "blessed", "abundant"; while *t'argyalàz* is derived from the Georgian word *mt'avar-angelozi*, archangel; it is not clear, however, which of the archangels is meant. According to the explanation of the Commission, this "icon" punishes the offending family by causing the death, in particular, of children. "If there are children in the family, it does not touch the adults," commented the Commission. Sacrifice to this "icon" is always offered by an oak tree. On the Thursday, early in the morning, sacrificial cakes are baked, and the whole family repair to their oak, which is usually situated nearby within the enclosure. Everybody kneels, [789] facing eastward, and the head of the family makes a bloodless offering consisting of *akwakwàr* and cakes, and entreats the great Dsatchkhur, the beneficent T'argialaz, to forgive them their trespasses, voluntary or involuntary. *Àämen* say the whole family. The oak tree is decorated [794] with pieces of many coloured stuffs, some fastened with nails and [778] some with wax. This oak is sacred and to fell, damage, or defile it is strictly forbidden.

On the same day, in the evening, but this time at home, the family [780] make a blood offering to *T'argyalàz*. A fattened capon is immolated and cakes are again baked. Some families keep pitchers with "sacrificial wine" in his honour.

"In ancient times when people were not so depraved, T'argialaz [789] procured for the day of offering a wild he-goat as his victim," Osman Kamkia informed me, "just as the Ilori 'icon' procured an ox. Now he no longer does so, for we are not worthy of his favours!" concluded the old man, sighing. The peasants Kamkia are *me-khat-ur-n-i* (Geo.), i.e. "attendants of the 'icon'." They keep a little cottage (*p'atskha*) [778] where the "god" is supposed to dwell invisibly. A money-box is kept in the cottage, into which the faithful drop copper coins used exclusively for the purchase of sacrificial offerings.

An old Megrelian, whose name has unfortunately become effaced in my note-book, told me the following:—

778 "The all-powerful and miraculous icon, Dsatchkhur, was removed 789 by the Svans from the Salkhino church, and taken to Svanet'i, where it remained for a long time; in the end, however, moved by pity for the Megrelians, the icon returned of its own accord and alighted on an oak which stands on the picturesque hill of Salkhino. Near this

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Aàzvibzha

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nəhwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nəhwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nəhwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nəhwa* (*anəhwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateypa, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

/29 cont./

765 rams, and, in general, whatever they can afford; furthermore
[262] they bring various sweetmeats prepared with butter and with honey, and also matsoni (sour /30/ milk), etc. One person in the procession holds in his hand a branching, tree-like candle, to which is fastened a strip of calico, green in color and soaked in wax. At the ends of the larger and smaller branches similar strips are hung, which are stirred by the wind like the leaves of a tree. (If the procession takes place at night, a few lighted candles are fastened to the branching candle as well as to the horns of bulls). Slowly the sad procession approaches the house and enters the yard, where it is met by the others. Here there is wailing and lamentation by the men and women separately.
[782] After this the bulls and rams are killed, each with the words, "It is offered to your soul."

The next day, i.e., on the day of the aphskhuvra, a great number of people gather. By noon one of the relatives of the deceased unties his horse and stands in the middle of a meadow, while the men and women form a circle around him. Then the horse is led around the circle three times, with the deceased's next of kin following behind, barefoot, bare-headed, in mourning attire, and weeping bitterly. The men beat their breasts and faces. The women stand in a circle divided into two groups alternately crying "avav." This ceremony ends with the horse being led out of the circle. From this time on, all earthly signs (remains) of the deceased are considered to have been destroyed; up to this time the deceased has been considered to be invisibly present in the gathering.

After this the guests seat themselves at a dinner. On the meadow, under the open sky, a long tablecloth has been spread out for them and various dishes have been prepared. Particularly
[262] noteworthy are spoons, cups, glasses, thimbles, etc. made out of cheese. The candles described above are placed there, too.

It must be noted that even though this banquet involves great expense, it is not burdensome to the hosts, since the expenses are shared, not only by the relatives, but also by the whole village where such a funeral repast is held.

/32 cont./

775 knapsack with great rejoicing to the burial-ground, where,
[766] through a hole drilled in the knapsack, the captured soul passes into the grave of the one who drowned.

769 In Abkhazia the dead are highly honored. The burial-
[764] grounds, as we have said, lie on high, picturesque places and are surrounded by fences. Shingled houses of a kind the Abkhaz do not make for themselves are built over the graves. Near the graves various fruit trees are planted -- apple, pear, peach, quince, etc. On the graves themselves the Abkhaz lay slices of melons, watermelons, cucumbers, etc. All this serves to confirm the belief that beyond the grave the souls of the dead require food, drink, lodging, etc., just like the living.

And in fact the Abkhaz do believe that the dead will enjoy, for example, the piece of melon placed on the grave. Because of this belief, for almost a full year after a death,
[264] a special share of each meal is laid on the table for the deceased, and banquets are held in his memory, etc. Besides this, annual funeral-feasts are held on the eve of the paternal Saturday for those recently deceased, and on the paternal Saturday itself funeral-feasts are held for those deceased longer. At the slaughter of the sacrificial animal, the head of the family says, "If there
769 is a life beyond the grave, here is this (offering) to your soul."
• 782 Then as food is prepared and placed on the tablecloth, the head of the family stands in front of the tablecloth and again says, "Deceased ones /33/, grant us the blessing of your souls! Do not harm us by death (mortification)! Make us and our cattle increase (multiply)! etc. At the conclusion of this invocation, he makes the sign of the cross in the air over the tablecloth with an iron spit and says, "All this, prepared by the power of fire and water, is sacrificed to your souls, if indeed there be a life beyond the grave." Having said this, the head of the family takes a glass of wine and drinks it; after this he puts pieces of the heart and liver from the sacrificed animal into a slice of gomi, pours a little wine over it, and throws it into the yard, saying:
775 "And this is for you, guiding and escorting souls." From this we
769 perceive that in Abkhaz belief the living relatives of the dead

/33 cont./

1175 1169 are visited by the souls of the deceased, together with other souls accompanying them. The Abkhaz believes that the more magnificently they (souls of the deceased) are met and treated, the more satisfied and generous they will be and the more co-operation and patronage they will give the living -- in the opposite situation, they would only harm the living. Those souls satisfied with their reception, upon their return to the souls of other deceased relatives, express their joy and praise the esteem paid them; unsatisfied souls, however, return extremely irritated and, when asked by the other souls about their reception, answer, "What could we have found there, if they themselves turn out to be just such dead ones as we?" The Abkhaz believe that in this case the unsatisfied souls' most terrible anger will fall on several members of the family that has thus failed to receive their relatives' souls in a proper manner.

The Abkhaz believe firmly that the souls of the deceased leave their graves and visit their living kin. They stand near [1182] their houses and whistle; they are placated by the pouring of wine or the throwing out of something. These souls of the dead like to leave their graves, particularly at night; they stand near the road and when they see a traveler they run after him in pursuit. Let us hear how the Abkhaz themselves report the significance of funeral banquets:

1. "Sesrkva was a well-known and brave man. During one raid, he lost his hundred companions in a skirmish; they were all killed. Sesrkva slaughtered a large number of bulls and rams and arranged a funeral banquet for his companions. Afterwards he himself was /34/ killed in a skirmish and buried none knew where. A friend of his expressed the wish to find Sesrkva's grave in order to mourn for him. After a lengthy search he at last found it and mourned Sesrkva, and because his village was far away and the hour late, he decided to spend the night right there. Having tied his horse to a tree, he lay down under an oak and soon fell asleep. He then dreamed that Sesrkva's hundred lads were in an excellent position in the other world; they were satisfied with everything, for they treated their guests honorably and fed their horses well. But Sesrkva himself and his horse

/35 cont./

upon the summit of the mountain Tabakona. They are divided into groups according to their degree of power: the younger ones usually travel upon mice, frogs, cats, etc., the older ones on foxes, wolves, etc. On Assumption Eve they are all obliged to gather upon the Tabakona for the annual report of their deeds to their sovereign, Roskipi, and to produce material proof of their industrious service -- a heart taken from a man or animal, a liver, eyes, nails, hair, etc. To avoid attack from witches, the Abkhaz take the following measures: during the fast of the Assumption they erect crosses and stick candles in their hair, and on the eve of the Assumption they shoot off rifles, sing, and spend the whole night in vigil. The Abkhaz believes that a witch can simultaneously be at home, among people, and on top of the mountain Tabakona. The Abkhaz explain such a splitting-up of a person by saying that it is not the witch herself that wanders about, but her accessory soul (aphschchda = superfluous soul).

2.

The True God -- Paganism -- The Principal and Secondary Gods of the Abkhaz -- Causes of Polytheism -- "Creators" and "Forgers" -- Fate or Predestination.

To assist the supreme being, endowed with all the qualities with which, according to our understanding, God is endowed, says Mr. A., Abkhaz mythology added a number of other deities, assigning to each his particular designation. These assisting deities, according to their understanding, were created by the Almighty before man and the universe came into being, and people at prayer appeal through them to God himself. God himself never descends to earth, but if he needs to punish someone or to grant someone his grace, he sends out one of his assistants. In the prayers which are said and sung at sacrifices and other

/35 cont./

176 religious ceremonies, the Abkhaz addresses God thus: Akhdau
[182] (or antsa-daukva) /36/ zlypkha-khkhaura, which means "Great God, merciful one, gracious one."

Besides this merciful god, the Abkhaz, as we have said, have other secondary gods, whose creation was necessitated by the people's needs. Every atmospheric phenomenon, every danger threatening a man or his property, every type of toil assuring the existence of man created in the childish imaginations of these people separate, invisible protectors, ruling over all. These deities have no images, since they appear in different forms according to the circumstances; nevertheless, according to the understanding of the Abkhaz, not to be doubted, for it is felt in all the good and evil that can happen in the life of a person. Every step of a man is under their control and every departure from the true way immediately evokes punishment by them.

174 As science has proved by a multitude of analogous examples
176 from other primitive peoples, there can be no doubt that nature and its phenomena have played an enormous role in the development of the religious ideas and theistic images of the Abkhaz people. Their childlike mentality and imagination were undoubtedly strongly influenced by the azure sky, resting like an immense vault upon the earth, now threateningly and severely looking down from behind the clouds, now smiling with its fiery eyes, the sun by day and the moon and the stars by night. Mother Earth herself also exerted her influence upon them, for she is indeed mother, nurse, provider, and source of blessings and abundance; nor did the sun, the "eye of heaven," giving warmth and life to the whole world, remain without influence on their childlike imaginations, nor the moon, the "guard of night," which quietly floats on the vault of the sky and conquers the darkness of night; the threatening thunder bolt, instilling terror and destroying everything in its way; the air, now quiet and friendly and still, now threateningly perturbed and howling; the colorful, beautiful rainbow, this "belt" of the sky; the dawn, that "gate of Day"... All this and much else, of course, greatly

/37 cont./

777 been born; God save me from such a marriage." And so he
776 planned to kill the newborn baby; when everyone in the
539 house had fallen asleep, he slipped quietly in, carried the child out, ripped open her belly, and threw it upon the flat roof of the hut. Then the two thieves went on their way. The child's wailing awakened the women, who found her, sewed up the wound with silk thread, and thus saved her from death. And no matter how hard the thief about whom the above-mentioned prophecy was made tried to find a wife, he was /38/ unsuccessful. Meanwhile the girl who he thought was dead reached marriageable age and one day somehow met the thief. He immediately fell in love with her and married her. Then it was shown how inevitably every predestination and decision made by the "creator-forgers" is fulfilled.

VII.

Prayers in Honor of the Deities

•782 Prayer is the name given to those religious ceremonies and rites accompanied by sacrifices in honor of the gods which are performed according to a definite pattern set and sanctified from olden times.

[776] Each deity may independently show, within his sphere of activity, grace or wrath toward man; for instance, he may send sickness or misfortune on him or his cattle, etc.
[787] The Abkhaz easily determine by special signs whether the deities' anger is the result of deviations from the fixed pattern
[688] of the religious rites. To avert the wrath of the gods caused by omissions in prayers and sacrifices, they must repeat the offerings and complete whatever was omitted the first time; uncorrected omissions and mistakes in ritual weigh heavily as guilt felt toward the angry gods, even upon generations
[755] far removed from the sinners. If anyone falls ill in conse-
[753] quence of neglect in ritual toward one or another god, he must offer him a sacrifice in order to recover. If he is

/38 cont./

782 755 753 unable to perform that act because of his sickness, he then presents something as a pledge, saying, "If you (God) are sending this (sickness) because of my guilt, then relieve me; I shall pray to you as is fitting and as the sorcerer will instruct me." But when he does not know which deity is angry and is causing his sickness, he says, "No matter what caused this illness, I shall do whatever the sorcerers may recommend." The pledge is specially set aside as a sacred object until his vow is fulfilled. The performers of prayers during such religious rituals are men or women, depending upon the sex of the deity in whose honor the ceremony is performed.

I shall proceed to a description of the ceremonies themselves.

1.

/39/

782 755

The Ceremony in Honor of Mother Earth

A sinless woman, taking six nuts and a few grains of millet, leads the sick one to an alder tree. Here she carries the three nuts and several grains of millet around the tree in the name of the earth; then she does the same thing around a nut-tree (walnut) in the name of Adabna, begging him to have pity on the sick person. She then makes [532 789] a richly-dressed doll in the image of a man, buries it in the earth for the "liberation" of the sick person, and says, "Play and amuse yourself with this instead of with the sick one." After this, a large millet-loaf is baked -- "the bread of Mother Earth" -- and two other long loaves of bread for Adabna. The same woman takes a piece from each of the four sides of the first loaf, both the loaves in honor of Adabna, a candle, and incense, and with the sick person goes to the crossing of three roads, where she places the pieces of the millet-loaf at one road, the two loaves of Adabna at the second, and at the third she lights the candles and places chevyaki (shoes) there, saying: "Mistress Earth, these are your shoes!" She then places the sick person on his knees

/39 cont./

782 755 among the articles so laid out, with a "chikila" (a kind of veil) on his head, and begs, "Adgil-ankhu, Atula-ankhuse, grant him your favor! Give him firmess of head, heart, and body! Give him color, skin, and bone! Give him back the will to speak and to work! Give him strength! Deliver him from evil," etc. In the same way she also prays to Adabna. After this, she removes the chikila from the sick person with a nut-twig, raises him, strikes him on the back with a whip, and says, "Go, from this day I grant you freedom (azati)," and then both go home. At home a loaf of millet-bread is broken in two; two women each take a half and stand on the two sides of the hearth opposite each other; the sick person passes three times between them under the loaf, while one of the women exclaims, "Give me the one who has assumed the Hebrew belief," and the other, "Give me the convert to Christianity."

753 755 The Abkhaz is convinced that the invisible being that settled in the sick man hastens immediately upon leaving him to enter someone else, and so, to help him find a new victim, they pray to him at the crossroads, where there is a continuous /40/ traffic of people, and, subsequently, a victim is always found it is unnecessary to search very long. And since an illness can be caught from a spot where a person accidentally fell or sat down, the rite of appeasing the [823] earth must be performed on the very same spot of the falling or sitting from which the sickness originated; the doll must be buried on exactly the same spot. This is why, in order not to catch something evil from the spot where he sat down, [789] the Abkhaz spits three times on getting up and says, "Here stood the house and courtyard of my grandfather!"

2.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Water

782 755 791 When someone is ill for a long time with a fever, a female fortune-teller is asked for advice and help; she usually

/40 cont./

782 prescribes a prayer to the water, which is thought to be the
755 cause of the illness. Since the protectress of the waters,
[791] the "Mother of Water," is a woman, a sinless old woman is invited to the ceremony.

776 - A large, clear, inaccessible fresh-water lake is thought
[778] to be the residence of the "Mother of Water"; she may also dwell in a pure spring, untouched by anything unclean, such as a pig, etc. The "Mother of Water" sometimes comes out of her dwelling to the shore, and at that time anyone may see her. This is how the Abkhaz describe this "Mother of Water." She is a most beautiful, bewitching woman; her locks are incomparable and chestnut in color; her eyes are laughing. The Abkhaz who has been bewitched by her talks
753 to his comrades thus: "Eh, brothers, I have been vanquished
776 by the 'Mother of the Water,' and from now on I no longer
539 belong to your society. Recently I rode into a dense forest and saw a table spread there under a big oak; a mirror and a lighted candle stood nearby; the 'Mother of the Water' was sitting in front of the mirror, smiling at her own beauty and combing her long hair, which reached the ground. My arms fell to my sides from exhaustion; I could not take my eyes from that wonderful vision. When she saw me, she quickly arranged her hair and came towards me. I felt giddy... Without a word she raised all ten fingers, asking me, 'Are you willing to be my husband for ten years or not?' I shook my head, but she would not stop, and with the proper number of fingers raised, she offered me in turn nine, eight, seven years, and so on /41/ of marriage. As I kept on refusing, she finally raised her last little finger and fixed her gaze upon me. I immediately gave my consent..." (1).

1. "Etnograf. pis'ma iz Abkhazii /Ethnographical letters from Abkhazia/," Konst. Machavariani, Droeba, 1884-1885.

755
782 The "pure" old woman who was invited to the ceremony,

/41 cont./

755 unnoticed by the occupants of the house of the sick, takes
782 some object belonging to the sick person, e.g., a dress, etc., and goes to the river. Standing on the bank, she says, "Mother of the Water, mistress, if the sick person was bound by you, unbind him"; she then touches the water three times with the object belonging to the sick person and scoops up a few drops of it with alder leaves, which she carefully carries home, where she fastens them to the ceiling above the hearth, convinced that the fever will then disappear like the water in the leaves; then she runs out of the house with the words, "May your sickness also run away like this."

[756] If the sick person feels relief after this, a praying-woman is invited in, a hen and a rooster are prepared with a stuffed loaf of unleavened bread, and three candles are molded, which are distributed in the following manner: the hen and one candle are allotted to the "Mother of the Water," the rooster and the second candle to her husband, and the third candle to their maid-servant, called Abzahav-Abzachav (benefactress). The sick person goes to the water with the praying-woman and kneels down. The praying-woman takes a candle, lights it and places it near the water, and addresses a prayer for the relief of the sick person to the "Mother of the Water" -- dzdzlan dzahvvazh khiphsha gvasha ("Mother of the Water," "mistress of the water," Khiphsha Gvasha); she lights another candle and makes the same request of the "lord husband" of the "Mother of the Water, finally she sets in place the third lighted candle and begs the maid-servant to serve as intercessor and mediator for the afflicted one with her "masters." Then she passes her hand over the sick person's back and gives him "azati" (liberty) from his ailment.

782 585 844 A similar ceremony is performed for the young bride on the occasion when she is for the first time "led out to the water" (i.e., taken to fetch water); it is also performed for a woman in labor so that she may have plentiful milk. In this case, if the ceremony cannot be performed in full, an egg for the "Mother of the Water" is thrown into the water during the prayer.

/41 cont./

515 782 823 [783] Fearing to defile it, the Abkhaz avoids bathing in running water; if he bathes, upon coming out /42/ of the water he takes three stones and says, "I sinned against you today; I went into the water and bathed, but you, forgive me." With this prayer, he passes the pebbles around his head with his hands and throws them into the water.

3.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Rainbow

753 [755] [782] The ceremony in honor of the rainbow, which is not obligatory for all, is performed for the greater part on persons whose sickness, according to the female fortune-teller, is caused by the rainbow. A prolonged yellowness of the face, a weakening of the organism, instability of character -- the [821] Abkhaz attributes all these to the fact that the sick person entered water at the very moment when the rainbow was drinking from it.

755 782 "Sinless" old women, having planned a sacrifice and promised a prayer, lead the sick person out to a brook; they take with them two fried capons, two stuffed loaves of unleavened bread in the shape of a tongue, and other provisions, as in the performance of the ceremony in honor of the water. On both sides of the brook, clean objects are laid out, such as clothes, silver, etc., a little bridge made of thread is thrown over the river from one bank to another. Having prepared all this, the praying-woman, with a doll that has been prepared beforehand in her hands, walks around the sick person, who is kneeling down covered with a piece of calico, and prays for him to the rainbow, known by the name Eliaphshi; then she takes a candle and addresses a similar prayer to the "Mistress Mother of the Water," and her "lord husband." After praying over the provisions she takes some [789] of each dish and throws it into the water; she places the doll in a pumpkin, and, after adorning the latter with lighted

/42 cont./

755 candles, she lets it float down the stream, saying, "Amuse
782 yourself with this one, instead of the sick person." Finally
[789] the old praying-woman passes her hand over the sick person's back, raises him, and having given him liberty ("azati") from his ailment, she sends him home, instructing him not to look around on his way back. The food brought to the stream is eaten on the spot by the participants in the ceremony; the remains from the table are thrown into the water and the dishes washed clean.

This prayer-ritual is considered the most sacred of all in Abkhazia, and the name of the rainbow, Atsaqva, is pronounced with great reverence. The Abkhaz claims that as
[821] a consequence of this ceremony in the rainbow's honor the rain appears.

4.

/43/

782 The Prayer-Ceremony in Honor of the Wind (Phsharnha)

A large loaf of bread with cheese is prepared, placed in a basket, and carried some distance from the house. Here
[776] a prayer is said to "Lady Wind" (a deity of female sex), in
[825] which she is asked to bring good and to carry off evil and to
[777] deliver them from all sorts of misfortunes, etc. Then the middle part of the loaf is cut out, carried into the forest, and hung on an oak tree near the top. The next day, the one who first comes near the oak tree feasts on this offering.

5.

A Prayer in Honor of a Tree

782 On Assumption Day, vitushki are baked according to
804 the number of men in the family; then the master of the house, with his household, approaches any kind of young tree and, putting his foot on it, prays, "Tree, give me your blessing and happiness ... that I may safely come down

/43 cont./

782 824 from the treetop. May the fresh twig, when I step on it with my foot, first grow stronger and then, being strengthened, grow fresh (soft), etc."

6.

782 755 A Prayer in Honor of Adnqa or (the same thing) "the Outer Ones"

[775] [753] The souls of the dead, the "outer ones," are often the cause of sickness in man and his cattle. They often become angry, and the outward signs of such anger are frequent yawning, sleepiness, and general exhaustion visited upon the culprit. If the one afflicted does not satisfy the angered "outer ones" with offerings and prayers, an inevitable death awaits him. On one of the Saturdays a meal is prepared of young rams' meat, chicken, sour milk, and the meat of a cow, if the soul of a woman is angered, and all these provisions are laid out on a tablecloth under the eaves, on both sides of which are placed a dress and valuable /44/ objects.

The sick man or woman is placed in the middle of a circle and either a man or a woman, according to the sex of the sick person, prays and begs the living and the dead (Angi-phsngis) to have mercy upon the sick and to grant him health and to accept the food prepared for them. The person pronouncing the prayer for the sick one then passes his hand over the back of the sick person and gives him freedom from his sickness ("azati"). If the ailment is thought to be caused by the soul of a prince or of some other personage of [825] high rank, a tethered horse is untied and released in a field at the concluding words of the prayer: "This (horse) is for your soul." According to Abkhaz belief, such a horse soon swells up and dies.

/44 cont./

7.

782
585
[776]

The Prayer Ceremony in Honor of Azhahara

The Abkhaz call the protector or genius of the house and hearth by the name Azhahara in whose honor is performed the ceremony for a young married couple in the stage of their marriage before they have appeared together before their elders and the young woman is for the first time led into her husband's main house, or when the bride is invited into her father's house. One of the oldest members of the family sticks pieces of the heart and liver of a sacrificial animal on a spit and begs Azhahara to protect the young couple at home and out of doors.

8.

Alishkantra

782
231
[776]

Alishkantra is the "mistress" of dogs. In the opinion of the Abkhaz, the owner of good dogs will also be fortunate in the multiplication of his cattle; good fortune in dogs is associated with good fortune in all domestic animals. Therefore before praying to other god-protectors of domestic and wild animals, the Abkhaz prays to Alishkantra to grant him luck with good dogs and the opportunity to raise and breed them.

9.

/45/ A Prayer in Honor of Zhabran

[776]
[796]
262

Zhabran is the protector of animals. Every Abkhaz owning cattle performs the prayer-ceremony in his honor on "Cheese Saturday." For this they prepare suluguni (a big cheese) called "sacred cheese"; bread dough is placed on the hearth, in which a man puts a core of suluguni, whereupon he prays, "Prefer me to all those pronouncing your name;

/45 cont./

•782 231 make my cattle multiply; make them increase to such an extent that in the future I may pray to you and offer you a cheese as big as this loaf of bread and my courtyard will have no room for all my cattle. Preserve my cattle from all trouble and misfortunes both at home and outside; grant that my cattle will lose only old hair and dung; grant that my herd will be so large that an animal walking in the rear will be unable to overtake one running in the front; may the calves play like young bears and shine like young stallions. This I ask of you." Then the person praying puts three walnut branches in the bread dough and, striking against the ceiling, exclaims, "Voots! chiphsh!" (a call to summon cattle). The same ceremony is performed on the Thursday of "Cheese-
[796] week" in honor of the protector of goats; it is called Dzhabran.

10.

A Prayer in Honor of Aithar

[796] Aithar is the protector of domestic cattle and the
[796] farm economy. The prayers to him are held on a Saturday, except during Lent, because offerings to him must consist of milk products, and among the rich the offering is a milk-fed calf. The customary dish at this time is a thin gruel made with the milk of a cow that has recently calved. The shepherds stand around a kettle or pot filled with gruel; the oldest of them, holding a wax candle, pronounces a prayer: "Aithar, grant me superiority above all those who pronounce your name." He then begs Aithar to increase his herds and to protect them from beasts of prey. Upon concluding /46/ the prayer, the shepherd throws three spoonfuls of gruel into a brazier with coals standing nearby, and the participants eat the rest. If the inhabitants of the whole village or a part of it perform the ceremony in honor of Aithar, then a calf is sacrificed, which is slaughtered by the most respected old man, who first pronounces a prayer. After the meat of the calf has been cooked or roasted, the same old man

/46 cont./

782 231 pronounces a prayer the second time, cutting off pieces from different parts of the animal and offering them to Aithar by throwing them on the red-hot coals.

11.

Azhvephshaa (Abn-intsvakhu)

782 224 [776] [796] Azhvephshaa is the god of the forests and wild animals. Hunters sacrifice to him before setting out on a hunt, usually the middle or at the end of December. For the sacrifice, they jointly buy a ram or a goat. When it is roasted, the oldest huntsman prays to Azhvephshaa to send success for their undertaking; at the conclusion of the prayers, he throws small pieces of roasted meat and a piece of incense on the coals. Each of the remaining hunters repeats the prayer in turn, adding his own wishes and indicating the particular animal he would like to kill, while throwing pieces of incense on the coals.

12.

Dzhadzha and Anaphanga

782 241 [776] [796] Dzhadzha is the patroness of the crops. Prayers to her are offered twice a year: in March, at the beginning of spring, and in November, after the maize has been stored. Praying to Dzhadzha is not accompanied by any special solemnity; it is performed quietly by each individual family. Rich landowners sometimes invite their former dependents to the prayer, particularly those who have taken part in the sowing and reaping of their crops. On the day set aside for prayer, dishes made exclusively of grain and fruits grown by the master of the house are prepared. After the food has been placed on the table, the oldest member of the family /47/ addresses a prayer to Dzhadzha, thanking him for the good harvest or begging him to send everything in abundance. For the spring prayer to Dzhadzha, all the dishes prepared are lenten.

/47 cont./

782 241 [776] The Abkhaz asks of Anaphanga, the goddess of crops: "Wherever I draw my furrow and strike with iron and with implement, may an abundance of grain be granted me; grant happiness to the sower and to the consumer." During reaping, when the sheaves are first brought home, the Abkhaz prays in honor of Anaphanga; during the fast of Assumption, however, a cross is made of the ears; kernels of maize and beans are fastened to a candle to avert possible harm by evil spirits, e.g., by Dzhadzha herself. This [776] Dzhadzha is an ugly goddess, short and fat; when she comes into a field she exclaims, "Natsvis, natsvis" (little finger! little finger!), i.e., the wish that the maize in that field grow no higher than a little finger, but if one pursues Dzhadzha with the words, "Raki dzaki, raki dzaki" ("cubit-span, cubit-span"), she leaves the field and her wish does not come true.

[243] Before the threshing of the gomi /millet/ the Abkhaz pray to the great goddesses to keep the whole family in good health and to permit the whole household in future, and at the head the lady of the house herself, to gather at the beater for the threshing of the gomi (satsekhveli).

13.

A Prayer for the Bees

782 231 The Abkhaz bake a round loaf of bread with cheese, take it to the bee-garden, and pray to Ananagunda for the preservation of their bees; upon returning home, they break the loaf and eat it without looking at one another, for which some stand facing one door, some another.

14.

Prayer to the Sun and the Moon

782 821 The Abkhaz addresses the sun with the following prayer: "Sunlight, withhold not your benevolence from us, warmth

/47 cont./

782 and light, well-being and success in everything; grant
821 beauty, charm, and elegance to our maidens so that, like you, they may shine, glitter, and warm people." In the prayer to the moon, they express the wish that the children should become like it in brilliance.

/48/ 15.

Prayer to Khphath and Khvnash

782 This prayer is offered on the Saturday of the week of
[796] Thomas, with cheese, bread, wine, candles, etc. brought as offerings. The aim is to solicit health and prosperity for the family. On one of the following Saturdays a similar prayer is addressed to Khvnash. Khphath and Mdzhath are
[551] men's names in Abkhazia.

16.

"Ananaha"

782 Anan means "mother." The oldest woman of the
796 household places some money on a loaf of bread (Anan l phara = money of Anan) and goes into the kitchen-garden where she places three cucumber-leaves on the loaf of bread and the same number on her own head. She then fastens a lighted candle to a cucumber stalk and, holding incense in her hands, prays, "Mothers and creators, do not let me have grief from my sons: do not cast me into sorrow because of them, but let me see them prosper." A similar prayer is said to Ashatsanha, the god-creator or god-father. A cow and money are offered in sacrifice to him. During Lent, the village maidens also used to pray to the "Mother of the Waters" that she might grant them long and thick hair.

17.

Prayer for the Ear

753 The Abkhaz says, "ahsa r lmha i klou," which means

/48 cont./
753 "hung on the girls' ears." Rheumatic pains in the knees, instability of character, general weakness of the organism of a person, etc. -- all these are consequences of a
789 "weighty cause." To avert the sickness, a button is fastened to the ear like an earring. An innocent and sinless woman
755 leads the ailing person to a nut-bush and makes him kneel;
782 she drives seven /49/ sticks of nut-wood into the ground around him, fastens a lighted candle to each of them, and prays
[776] on behalf of the sick person to hanipha, the genius, walking along the rocks.

18.

Prayer in Honor of the Supreme Being

776
753 This supreme being is believed to be the cause of all kinds of sickness in man. When the body-temperature of a seriously sick person fluctuates greatly and he is alternately thrown into a fever and chills, when he faints or loses consciousness and regains it momentarily, and then begins to toss and become delirious, to sing songs, to mumble prayers, etc., the Abkhaz believe that all these severe pathological conditions are unmistakable signs of action by a superior force, by the supreme deities (Antsa r mzz) on the sick person -- "there is a divine cause." The Abkhaz are convinced that this "divine cause" has taken up its abode in the sick person and therefore they say, Antsa drthoup, i.e., "a god
755 came to visit." When the female fortune-teller confirms
[787] that the cause of the sickness is indeed that "a god took up his abode" in the sick person, then everyone in the house must assume a gay appearance and rejoice instead of grieving, for "where the god has taken up his abode, there can be nothing but rejoicing." Therefore the village youth gathers in the house of such a patient and all begin to sing and dance, and even the sick person is made to take part in the dances and singing, if he is strong enough to do so.

[782] The prayer-sacrifice is carried out near the house on the edge of a forest. The offering is a goat or a kid, a

/49 cont./

755 ram or a lamb, together with loaves of bread, etc. All
782 this is taken to the place selected, and the patient himself
is led there. No women are present, for they are not
[562] allowed to approach this sacred place. A venerable man, holding a candle, declares, "Great god, as is proper and as the fortune-teller has prescribed, the worshiper today stands before you; he has brought sacrificial animals and loaves of bread ... . Have mercy upon him, be merciful to him, if he has sinned before you, forgive him. I beg you to let him go from this day forward, to leave him and free him like a loosened knot." While saying these words, the venerable man moves the candle around the patient, lights it, and places it nearby. He then /50/ takes another candle
[776] and prays to Michael-Gabriel. Upon the completion of this ceremony, the sick person returns home alone, while the others sit down to a meal.

One such ceremony, however, is not considered sufficient for the send-off of so eminent a guest as a god. The
[796] Abkhaz is therefore obliged to repeat the ceremony annually. One day a week is set aside as a holiday in honor of that same supreme being; this day is considered such a sacred one that the house even remains unswept, etc.

19.

Aphi

776 Aphi (2) is the god and master of the thunder, lightning,
821

[113] 2. See Sborn. sveden. o kavk. gortsakh, No. V, Tiflis, 1871, pp. 15-16, article "Religioznyye verovaniye abkhaztsev /Religious beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A. -- where, by the way, this deity is called Afy.

[782] and all atmospheric phenomena in general. The most solemn prayers in Abkhazia are offered in honor of this god.

/50 cont./

782 233 [796] On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder-[562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

782 731 789 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre-[533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva rysshva and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also [821] during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second, to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one 782 731 574 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, reminding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

/51 cont./

782 731 574 one of those present begins to glorify the god: "Anchva dukhva zlyphkha khkhaura!" "O you who descends from heaven with lightning and ascend to heaven with thunder, who knows the number of the stars in heaven and of the sands at the bottom of the sea ..." etc., and he concludes the poem with the words, "akhdau." All those present, divided into two groups, repeat every line of the hymn in turn, always three times over.

782 821 The killing of one of the herd by lightning unfailingly evokes prayer to Aphi; on the other hand, if he is not appeased by sacrifice, a repetition of his visit must be expected. The owner of the dead animal invites the inhabitants of the village, without distinction as to age or sex. On the spot where the animal was killed, a tower is built about one and a half sagene in height, so that beasts of prey cannot climb it. All those present surround the killed animal, join hands, and dance, half of them singing "Voetla" and the other half answering "Chaupar," and they raise the animal onto the tower, still singing and dancing, and leave it there as a victim for the birds of prey. Then the owner of the animal killed by lightning sacrifices a bull to Aphi, at the same time thanking him for the present visit and begging him nonetheless to spare him future visits. Various dishes are prepared from the meat of the sacrificed animal; bread, cheese, and wine are brought, and those present feast all day long at the expense of the man who suffered the loss. The day the animal was killed by lightning becomes so memorable in the family that has thus been visited by Aphi that neither the head of the family /52/ nor his children will give anyone anything on the anniversary of that day, saying that they expect a visit from Aphi on that day.

[527] [431]

[766] The same ceremony is performed when a person has been struck by lightning. During the dance around the corpse, none of the relatives of the dead man dares to weep; otherwise all the participants will be struck dead by a thunder-bolt.

/52 cont./

2. Ibid., p. 162.

175 764 of Syracuse (who lived about the middle of the fourth century B.C.) said /53/ that "it is not accepted among the Colchians either to bury or to burn the corpses of men. They put these corpses in fresh animal-hides and hang them on trees. They commit to the earth the corpses of women, however, ... They venerate heaven and earth above all" (1).

1. Ibid., p. 208.

20.

Shasha

326 796 Under the name of Shasha the Abkhaz understand the inventor of the craft of the smith. They say of him, "Shasha khe ah-dou," which means, "Shasha, the great lord of trades." Shasha or Shash was the first blacksmith. He picked up the red-hot iron, not with tongs, but with his hands, and he forged it, not on an anvil, but on his knees. He is the inventor not only of the craft of the smith, but the inventor-patron of 363 other crafts as well. The smithy with all its appurtenances is the image of Shasha (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888, No. 186.

● [082] [096] Prayers are offered up to him on New Year's Eve, and the most complete of the ceremonies to him is held by the [914] blacksmiths and the locksmiths.

782 326 On New Year's Eve the master of the house kills either a calf or a ram, and his wife kills a rooster for each member of the family and prepares a pie of wheat-flour and fresh cheese. The livers and hearts of all the slaughtered animals are roasted separately; for this, instead of a spit, a stick from a young nut-tree is used. When the food is ready

/53 cont./

782 326 and has been brought into the smithy, the blacksmith puts all his instruments on the anvil; a brazier with coals is placed nearby and the whole family kneels down around the anvil. After taking off his bashlyk and his belt (as proof that he addresses Shasha with an open heart and mind), the smith lights a wax candle, throws incense on the coals of the brazier, and prays to Shasha to bless him and his family with good health and long life, and to make the instruments forged from iron do him good rather than harm. After all those present have pronounced "Amen" at the end of the prayer, the master of the house cuts pieces of the pie and of the organs roasted on the nut-wood spit and throws them on the brazier with the words: "Until that time when I am unable /54/ to feed with these little pieces all Shervashidzi and Anchabadzi, let no one in my family fall ill. I pray to you for this, Shasha, bringing to you a real sacrifice." The smith then cuts off just such little pieces from the other sacrifices and distributes them to all the members of the family, who eat them and wash them down with three swallows [273] of wine. The host designates the wine for this repast immediately after the harvesting of the grapes and saves it in a separate jug called shēsher gaphshi, buried in the smithy itself; under the fear of punishment by Shasha, no one dares to touch it, even in any extremity, before New Year's Eve, neither the host himself nor, all the more, one of the bystanders. Upon the completion of the praying, the prepared dishes are transferred to the house of the smith, where the neighbors gather and feast to the glory of Shasha until dawn.

782 796 565 Several princes also offer a prayer to Shasha on New Year's Eve, in which case each of the persons present, having been at one time dependent on these princes, brings a rooster. Shasha is one of those divinities called upon by the Abkhaz more often than others.

796 According to the understanding of the Abkhaz, the divinity whose name is called falsely immediately punishes the guilty one by those means or tools which are in the field of his specialty. Thus, for instance, one who has called

/54 cont,/

796 falsely the name of Aphi, who commands the thunderstorms, cannot be punished by means of firearms or side arms, which make up the specialty of Shasha, etc.

782 326 Oaths to Shasha are of two kinds: in the smithy and under the open sky. In the first instance, the smith, having placed the hammer on the anvil and crossed his hands on his breast, stands to one side of it, the one swearing the oath on the other side of the anvil, opposite the smith, and the one concerning whose affairs the oath is being sworn stands to the side. The one swearing the oath, having taken the hammer into his hands, says: "If I am guilty of that of which they accuse me, then may Shasha smash open my head on the anvil"; upon these words, he hits the anvil three times with the hammer, and the oath is considered sworn. In the second 782 instance, two sticks are driven into the ground, one opposite the other; on them are hung loaded rifles whose muzzles are trained on the space occupied by the one swearing the oath; those present stand to the side. The one swearing the oath pronounces, "If I said a lie, may Shasha shoot bullets through my head /55/ from these rifles," and he walks through the space between the rifles three times.

755 782 326 [787] At the first sign of sickness accompanied by headaches, the person who has taken a false oath asks his relatives to find out from a female fortune-teller the cause of his ailment. The fortune-teller, who has usually heard beforehand, from the blacksmith himself about everyone who has taken an oath, throws some beans and looks at the stars, and then indicates the cause of the sickness: a false oath sworn to Shasha on such and such a day, in connection with such and such a matter, and in such and such a smithy. One of the ailing person's relatives goes to the person concerning whose affairs the false oath was sworn and by gifts induces him to pray to Shasha to forgive the patient, promising, of course, that upon recovery the patient will give him complete satisfaction. Then they both go to the smithy where the oath was taken, and the

/55 cont./

755 782 326 sick man's accuser, taking off his belt to bear witness to the sincerity of his address to Shasha, approaches the anvil and utters a prayer in which he requests Shasha to deliver the guilty one from his ailment, with a pledge that after his recovery the sick man will come himself to beg for forgiveness from Shasha; then, leaving a piece of iron in the smithy, he goes to set the patient's mind at reast. If the sick man recovers, he satisfies the injured one and goes with him to the smithy, and, having put a small silver coin (no less than two rubles) on the anvil, thanks Shasha for his recovery; the ram, the bread, and the wine that he has brought with him are given to the blacksmith, from whom, after the prayer, he receives pieces of the ram's liver and heart; he sends these to his family as a token of Shasha's forgiveness. In company with his relatives, the injured party, and the blacksmith, he himself eats the food that was brought along in the blacksmith's house.

21.

The Prayer to Eyrig-aatsnykh

579 782 [776] [778] Eyrig-aatsnykh is the patron of stealing, plundering, and robbery. Beyond the river Bzyb this deity is called Chugurukhnykh; all the Abkhaz setting out to steal among the Ubykh, Shapsug, and other mountain-dwellers used to bring offerings to Chugurukhnykh, whose altar, if this expression may be used here, /56/ was located on a cliff beyond the fortification of Gagra. Prayers to this god are offered only by those who practice the "arts" of which he is the patron. An offering of four cone-shaped loaves of bread is brought; a prayer is said over them, asking a blessing upon the enterprise and giving a promise to sacrifice something else to the god in case of success. The loaves of bread are taken along on the trip. The thank-offering consists of something of the stolen goods, and if a horse or a head of cattle is taken, the sacrifice consists of a lock of the stolen animal's hair;

/56 cont./

579 782 all this is hung on trees near the place where Eyrig-aatsnykh is believed to have his permanent abode.

22.

Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh

776 Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh is worshiped as the mightiest of the gods. Mt. Dudryuphsh is regarded as his abode. Those [778] who dare to climb this mountain are immediately punished with blindness; therefore prayers and sacrifices to this deity are offered at the foot of the mountain. As a deity, Anybs-nykha has no exclusive, professional field of authority, but he is worshiped as higher and mightier than all the other gods. [782] The arrangement of prayers and sacrifices to him is the same as to Sha-sha, with the difference that when an oath is taken in his name, the formula is "May Anybs-nykha send me blindness and every ailment . . ., "etc.

778 Anybs-nykha's residence is under the exclusive supervision of the large Abkhaz family Ankhaë-Chichba. [923] The Chichba have enjoyed this right for several generations; it is a source of great profit to them, since permission to bring sacrifices to this deity must be bought from them with presents. Not far from the top of Mt. Dudryuphsh, the actual abode of Anybs-nykha, a stone lies under an oak; on this stone the image of the Holy Virgin has been carved. All those who [782] take an oath must put a coin or something metal under this stone, and woe to him who is tempted to take anything away, even one little thing, from among the objects lying there!

23.

/57/ Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

782 [796] [262] On Christmas Eve in every family chickens are killed and four kvakvari (small loaves of bread stuffed with cheese)

/57 cont./

[787] are made for each member of the family. The chickens
[796] must be fried and the kvakvari baked before cockcrow. Just
[262] after the first cockcrow the master of the house puts bowls on the table, into each of which he puts a chicken and four kvakvari; to each one he fastens a wax candle. A brazier with coals is placed near the table. All the members of the family kneel down around the table, each opposite his bowl,
[789] and the eldest person in the family, after removing his cap and throwing incense in the brazier, asks God to preserve him and his family from stomach disorders. After the prayer, all rise, turn to the right, and bow to the east; then everyone eats his portion, and each does his best to finish the meal without fail before dawn.

[796] On New Year's Eve, after supper, a prayer is again
[262] offered in each family to ask for all sorts of blessings. For this occasion a rectangular pie is prepared, stuffed with cheese; this is put on a board to which a wax candle is fastened. The whole family kneels around it, and the eldest in the clan throws incense on the coals and says the prayer; then the pie is eaten and the leftovers burned on the coals. This prayer is called Kalinda. On the first day of the New Year the prayer called Gunykhva (prayer of the heart) is
[262] offered. For this, a small loaf of wheat-bread stuffed with an egg is prepared for each member of the family. The head of
[789] the family raises a loaf to the breast of each member, praying to God to preserve them from heart ailments. After the prayer, each one eats his loaf.

24.

Drought

731
789 During a severe summer drought all the village girls gather in their best attire near the river. They divide themselves into three groups and make a raft of branches, cover this with straw, and make a doll, which they then dress up as a /58/ woman. When all these preparations are finished, a

/58 cont./

731 789 donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva [539] dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins [825] to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

25.

Saints

776 778 [184] Independent of the general worship of all the deities discussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny, Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke ●782 their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in [796] fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.

[231] - On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

/58 cont./

heifer is selected from the herd, and in the evening it is brought into the house where the family that is invoking the church's grace has its permanent residence. A supper is prepared, consisting of cooked or roast mutton, and the whole family washes and puts on clean linen. The head of the family takes a wax candle in one hand and in the other the rope tied around the calf's neck; he addresses the /59/ cathedral with a prayer for his protection and that of his family; he states that the calf will be dedicated to the church and that all its male offspring will be sacrificed to it, and that, instead of heifers, rams will be sacrificed. After this prayer an incision is made in the calf's ear; from this time on it is considered inviolable and cannot be used for food. On the day of its dedication to the cathedral the calf must spend the night in the house with the family.

If an inhabitant of one of the three above-mentioned villages moves away, he is obliged to bring an offering each year to the cathedral in the village of his birth. Girls from these villages who marry inhabitants of other villages are not exempt from this rule. They as well as their children are still regarded as under the protection of the cathedrals of Lykhny, Pitsunda, or Ilori and are therefore obliged to offer sacrifices to them.

M. Dzhanashvili

/A supplement on pp. 60-64, containing Abkhaz sayings and proverbs, is omitted in the translation; see foreign text./

[767 cont.]

776 good and bad. The Hammerers (Ašatsatšap'atsa) decide the fate of the newborn and write it on their foreheads (lakhintsara). As nature gods they worship the protector of cattle (Aĭt'ar), of goats (Džabran), of wild game (Ažvepša), of the earth (Adabna), of the rainbow (Atsakwa), and the protectress of the water (Dzlan dzahwas'), of the wind (P'šarn'a), of seeds (Dž'adž'a and Anap'anga), of dogs (Ališkantra), of bees (Ananagund), and others. Just like the Osset, they have a protector of raiders (Eirig-ātsnykh) or Tšugurukhnykh) and one of smiths (Šyošu). The latter two, which are called upon very frequently, may be of a manistic type, derived from the belief in souls, as may be the protective spirit of the hearth (Ašа'ara), the mother-goddess (Anana'a), and the "outer ones" (adnqa) (see p. 22). The Abkhaz attribute to the god of thunder (cf. p. 87) the same power and abilities as the Osset do to the holy Elias, but he is in part confused with the incomprehensible highest god (see p. 61) and is endowed with his abilities, and therefore also the shape of the local supreme god (Anybs-nykha-dudrüp's), whose home is supposed to be the mountain Dudrüpsh at Lykhny. ---Hunters sacrifice a male goat 224 [785] or a ram to the god of game (Ažvepša) before the hunt, which begins after the vintage [768] and lasts until about the new year, so that he will grant them the desired prey from his herds. He gives them, however, only those animals that he and his daughter have already eaten and that he has restored to life by wrapping [825] their bones in the skin after his meal. White animals are the herdsmen of Ažvepša and therefore must not be slain.

Evil souls, similar to the western European vampires, 776 tear the eyes, heart, liver, etc. out of the body and suck the milk from the cows. They have different powers and accordingly ride on frogs, mice, cats, or on foxes and wolves. Their chief (Roskipi) lives on the mountain Tabakona, where every year they must account for Mary's Assumption and must exhibit the plundered body-parts. For this reason the Abkhaz put up [788] crosses during fasts, carry lights on their heads, and on the previous night stay up and shoot and sing. The evil souls can at the same time stay among men and on the mountain Tabakona, since

A 776 [768 cont.] only their secondary souls (ap'ststsada) wander about.

A [777] Beside their old gods, the Abkhaz worship Christ as the Holy Teacher, Mary, and St. George as the protector of the villages Lykhny (Anan-Lykhnykh), Lsā or Pitzunda (Ana-Lsānykh), [783] and Ylori (Tsminda-Giorgi), to whom a sheep is sacrificed every year, and a calf with notched ears is donated to the churches.

C 778 The Cherkess, like the mountain Georgians, had sacred groves and trees, where in former times the public gatherings were held, where raiders found refuge, and where the spoils of the hunt and war and sacrificial offerings were hung. Also individual springs and mountains, certain stone columns (cf. p. 63), and iron and stone crosses were supposed to have been considered sacred.

C 782 The sacerdotal duties are performed by selected older men; they lead the prayers and slaughter the sacrificial animals, sheep, lambs, goats, oxen, in the sacred groves before the cross, after having previously singed them on the neck with a pine-torch and poured millet-beer over them (cf. below in Section III, 1b: Cheremis [untranslated]). The head of the animal is hung up on a tree for the god, the priest receives the skin, and the meat is eaten by the believers, who entertain themselves on festival [796] days with feasts, dancing, drinking, races, tournaments, and the like.

C 776 [769] The gods of the Cherkess are almost the same as those of the Abkhaz; they have a supreme being (T'ka) who reigns over the heavens; a god of the smiths (Tliebske), the protectors of agriculture (Yemikha, Skus'kha, Naokhatkha); the guardian of the forests (Mezitkh, Mezetkha), who rides on a boar with golden bristles and whose daughters milk the does; the lord of the bees (Merissa or Mereïme); three sisters who watch over domestic life, warriors in battle, and the traveler on his way; the god of the winds and waters (Seozeres), and others.

C 796 At the beginning of spring, a three-day celebration is held in honor of the last god, during which a dry pear-tree hung with garlands and other decorations, with a cheese at the top,

C 796 C [782] [769 cont.] and lighted with lamps, is set up in the house of an elder of the kin group. An animal is sacrificed in honor of the god, and after the feast the cheese is distributed among the participants as a magical remedy. Other festivals are celebrated: for the new year and for Easter, in March, when one first fasts, then slaughters an offering in the sacred grove, and enjoys himself by shooting at eggs, etc.; at the beginning of the harvest, when roasted unripe wheat with sour milk, and later other kinds of grain and fruit, are eaten as festive dishes; in October when the plants wither, etc.

A 796 ● 782 The Abkhaz show their reverence for the gods and spirits at given occasions or on certain holidays by the sacrificial offering of animals, milk, bread, and other things, and by prayers, which are often constructed with a wealth of words and are poetically exalted.

Thus, on New Year's Eve they kneel in prayer, sprinkling incense on a coal-pan, around a rectangular cheese-cake (suluguni)--this custom is called Kalinda, cf. the Kolinda of the Rumanians and others--and on New Year's Day the father of the house lays wheat bread with an egg baked in it on everyone's breast, and he directs the "heart-prayer" (gunykhwa) to God, that they may be protected from heart disease. On Christmas Day between the first crow of the cock and daybreak he begs that they be spared from stomach ailments; afterwards everyone eats a chicken and four small pieces of cheese-bread (kwakwari). The celebration of Syošu is also held on New Year's Eve, especially by the smiths. Here the father of the house prays to him for health and protection against harm from their work tools, and he throws into the fire pieces of curd-cake and of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animals: a sheep or calf for the father of the house, a rooster for each member of the family [Familie].

A 233 [782] C [776] A [231] Before driving the animals into the mountains and after driving them from there, the herdsmen sacrifice a ram in honor of the god of lightning (Ap'i, khakhikal = he who lives above, called Sible by the Cherkess) and pray that he spare them and their herds. When an animal is killed by lightning, [770] the owner calls out all the villagers; while singing and dancing

[770 cont.]

231 (atlar-tšoup'), they lay the animal on a quickly erected, three-meter-high framework or in a tree. The owner sacrifices an ox
• [782] and prays to be spared in the future; then they eat the meat of the sacrificial animal, bread, and cheese, drink wine, and feast
766 the entire day. The Abkhaz proceed in the same way for a person struck by lightning, but no one may weep lest the god become angry (see p. 87).

789 During drought one also turns to Ap'i to send rain; an
[782] ox is sacrificed, and at the feast songs of thanks and praise (antšva-ryšva) are sung in alternating chant. In order to evoke rain magic similar to that customarily practiced among the Balkan peoples is used (cf. also p. 64). The girls from the village stricken with drought place a female doll embodying the drought on a donkey and lead it to the river; here they put the doll on a raft made of twigs and straw, ignite it, and allow it to drift. They pull the donkey by force through the water, and if he brays, there will be rain.

755 Various gods are called upon in case of illness. Ague,
[753] delirium, and the like accompanying serious illness are attributed to the presence of the supreme god (Antsar mz) in the body of the sufferer. In order to cure him, they sing and dance about him
[780] and even force him to do the same; then they sacrifice bread and a goat or sheep in the vicinity of the house, during which no woman may be present; an old man with a candle circles the sick person and pleads with the god to forgive him and deliver him. He also prays afterwards to Michael-Gabriel.

In case of fever they look for help from the "Mother of
[776] the Waters"; she lives, according to them, in a clear lake or spring, is beautiful, has brown hair and laughing eyes, and likes to live for a while with a man, like the mermaids. An old woman touches the water with some object belonging to the feverish person and begs the goddess to release him if she has enthralled him. Then she ladles up a few drops of water on some alder-leaves and holds them over the fire in the house so that the fever may leave as quickly as the water on the leaves. Finally the old woman moves away quickly, with the wish that the fever, too,

[770 cont.]

755 might leave. As soon as the afflicted person is able, he himself goes to the water with a prayer-woman; there he kneels and
[782] offers up a hen to the mother of the waters, a rooster to her husband, and a candle to each of them and to her female servant (Abza 'avabzatšav = benefactress, intercessor). The woman prays and strokes the sick person on the back for "deliverance" (azati).

If someone suffers from jaundice or debility, [771] the "irreproachable" elders lead him to the river, lay his clothing, silver articles, etc. on both banks, and make a bridge of twisted yarn over the river; the prayer-woman then circles the sick person with a doll and prays to the rainbow in the name of the Eliap'ši, to the mother of the waters, and to her husband. She
[782] casts into the water pieces of the food that was brought along: roasted chickens, tongue-shaped flat cakes, etc., and she allows the doll to float downstream in a gourd with a burning candle, while she prays that the goddess amuse herself with it rather than with the sick person. Finally she gives the latter "deliverance," and he may not look back on the way home (cf. p. 924 f. [untranslated]).

231 When rinderpest struck, the Kemirkehe used to dig a
789 tunnel in a steep river-bank and in the middle of this a pit in which they fastened a black cat with a silver belt. They covered the pit with boards and earth, ignited a fire on top by rubbing two sticks together, and drove the cattle through the river and the tunnel, to the accompaniment of the priests' litany. Afterwards the cat was freed.

842 The above-mentioned threefold prayer at the water is aimed at fertility when one "leads to the water" a young woman
844 for the first time, during which an egg is thrown in, and, in the case of a woman in childbed, food for the infant.

787 The Abkhaz read signs for future events, for a favorable
[831] or unfavorable outcome for undertakings, from the stars, from the form of the moon, from meeting certain animals or human beings, and also, in the manner of the Tatars, from the cracks in a sheep's shoulder-blade that has been cast into the fire (see Vol. II, p. 325).

A C 627 [771 cont.]

Law. Blood vengeance is still practiced among the Cherkess (t'li'lvasa = blood price) and Abkhaz.

A C [608] Formerly when a prince had struck down a peasant, his relatives could not avenge themselves on him, but rather on his foster father (cf. p. 20). The wergild was measured in "souls" according to rank, and in spans according to the size of the body; the unit of value for this was one cow (cf. p. 747 [untranslated]). A "soul" of four spans was compensated for with 30 cows, a soul of five spans with 50 cows, of six spans with 70 cows; a peasant was reckoned at five souls, a nobleman at 15 souls, a prince at 25. The wergild consisted of cows, goats, sheep, and beehives; it was increased by one span if not paid on time. If the avenger was inclined to forgivesness, he confirmed it by kissing the breast of the guilty man's mother or wife (cf. above, p. 15).

C 685 Among the Cherkess theft was expiated in the same way as among the Khevsur. The thief had to return the stolen goods and thirty oxen as well to a nobleman, and to a prince he had to replace it ninefold.

A 592 428 When there is a division of an Abkhaz kin group, the father of the house and the mother receive half of the total property; if the father is already dead, the mother receives the dowry [Mitgift] that has been brought in and [772] an equal portion from each son. The oldest son has a right of priority (ai'ab-šakhu) in division or inheritance, and likewise--as among the Osset--the youngest (eidzb-šakhu); the farm, among other things, falls to the latter, the rest being equally divided among the other children, with the daughters receiving less. Among the Cherkess the eldest son had to care for his unmarried sisters; for this he received the bride-money (see p. 16) when he had them marry.

C 593

A 782 A peculiar oath of purgation is customary among the Abkhaz; the accused strikes the anvil three times with the hammer in the smithy and says that the god of the smiths may smash his head if he is guilty. Or he goes [Fig. 452 appears here] between two loaded rifles three times and challenges the god to shoot him in the head if he is lying.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVi6Zh9

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. ÀYT'AR-NƏ̀ħWA*

1. *Jabràn*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nə̀ħwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nə̀ħwa*, which is derived from *a-nə̀ħwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nəħwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabràn*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashə̀* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswə̀*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəsa*, a combination of *adswə̀*, a stick with a tapering end, and *àrsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'ħwəs-tsk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "ħ" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "ħw" represents a labialized variety of "ħ". [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† The combination "dsw" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "ds". For this latter sound see p. 329 (ts'). [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianski Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.

(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashə̀* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

Àyt'ar!" etc. The dough is kneaded from the same leaven, only when calling to the cows they exclaim *wootsw*. Shrove Saturday is dedicated to *zhwabràn*.

3. *Anàkha-nàhwa* (*Dopu-nàkha*)

Near Adzvibzha is a little village called Dopukət, where dwell the Dopua-s who are attendants (Geo. *me-khat-ur-i*) of the "icon"—*Dopu-nàkha*, revered by all the Adzvibzhaans and Dopukətans. This "icon" is known also as *zhwəjən-nàkha*, i.e. Sujuna icon, under which is meant, no doubt, St. George of Sujuna in Megrelia. This "icon" is called *zhwardk'yə* by the wives of the Dpua-s, for the reason that the wives of Abkhasians have no right to call by name the eldest members of their husband's *gvari*, or his relations. D. I. Gulia thinks that the word *zhwarak'yə* is the same as the Georgian *zvaraki*, meaning sacrificial animal (the ancient Georgian *zuaraki* = *zowaraki*, Armenian *zowarak*).[1] In honour of this "icon" every Adzvibzhaan and Dopukətan family bakes, on the Shrove Sunday, a cake from millet flour (*sorghum*, in Geo. *ghomi*), which is offered as a gift to it. Prayers are said by the head of each family, and a handful of salt and a piece of wax candle are put aside for the "icon". The eldest of the Dopua goes round the houses and collects the salt and wax.

Mamsər Dopua told us: "At the present time our icon is in the village Sujuna."

4. *Àyt'ar-nàhwa* (*khwazhwà-kwà*, in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kwà*)

On the first Monday[2] of the Great Fast the ritual of supplication to Àyt'ar himself is observed. This supplication is otherwise called *khwazhwà-kwà* (in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kwà*). *À-khwazhwà* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) is a special cake, sometimes coniform, and sometimes of round flattened shape. These cakes, which may be stuffed with cheese or not, but on this occasion are lenten, are invariably included in sacrificial offerings of the Abkhasians. They may be boiled, as on this occasion, or baked. *A-kwà* denotes "to hold". After it is called, in Abkhasian, the month of February, *khwazhwəkàn-mzà* (*a-mza*, month, moon). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) denotes also rhododendron, the leaves of which are indispensable in the making of sacrificial maize-cakes.

[1] As a cult term this word is met with in the form ჭარა in Sabaean (Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, ii, 24, 37, cf. p. 191, n. 179), see N. Marr, *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhasians and Alans*, etc. (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Pb., 1908, vol. xvi, p. 203. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The Megrelians call this Monday *t'at'ashkha beduieri*, lucky, or happy Monday, lit. the moon-day. With the Abkhasians, too, *Ayt'ar's* day is Monday; they pray to the moon exclusively on Mondays.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhaz RI3
Adzvibzha

1. *Adzɜrga-khwasha*

Either during the night before *baioba*, or, according to some members of the Commission, on the Wednesday evening of Passion-week, is observed the rite of binding legs with wool threads. Having supped early, the family retires to bed, each individual thrusting out his or her right leg from under the blanket. The eldest woman in the family stands on a stool in the middle of the room, and spins thread from wool. She does her work in silence. Having spun the required quantity, she quietly approaches the beds, and binds with this thread the right leg of each of their occupants, murmuring: "May God grant thee to see such days for a hundred years!" *Adzɜrga* (more correctly, *adzɜga*) denotes a thick thread; *a-khwasha*—Friday, so that this rite was in former days, probably, observed on Fridays. The threads were afterwards burnt on the fire under the small cauldron in which was boiled the meat of the sacrificial animal, on Easter Day.

2. *K'wab-gharghar**

As soon as the binding ceremony was finished, the woman seized a copper cauldron, or a copper basin, and struck it like a gong, shouting at the top of her voice: "We have beaten! We have beaten!" The whole family then ran out into the garden, shouting *shwakh'waf'weyt*! "We have beaten you (outstripped)!" The "beaten" neighbours, annoyed to find themselves "beaten", immediately fell upon them, and a mock battle ensued. The battle was fought, of course, entirely as a joke, and with great merriment. In ancient times, a whole village often went to "battle" against another, beating copper cauldrons and basins. The "battle" was followed by dances and fun-making continuing till the dawn. *A-k'wab* denotes cauldron of copper, *gharghar*, knock, rap, clatter of a copper cauldron or basin.

3. *Aqaf'wara*

This Abkhasian term denotes the following superstition: an Abkhaz considers it a great misfortune if he hears the warbling or chirping of a swallow or the call of a cuckoo, before he has had his breakfast (or has at any rate partaken of salt); the bird will have "beaten" him, and this he regards as a great misfortune. In order to avoid this he eats salt, or something salt-flavoured immediately on rising from bed, which means that he has won the "contest".[1]

* The labial semi-vowel "w" in "k'w", "f'w", as also in "kw", "fw", etc., met with in this article, labializes the preceding consonant sound, the combination "k'w", "fw", etc., representing labialized varieties of "k'", "f", etc. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Georgians also have such a superstition.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *The Gathering of Medicinal Herbs*

On Maundy Thursday, young maidens, led by old women, go into a forest early before the dawn, to gather medicinal herbs. They must neither converse nor look back. When they dig out the herb, they throw salt into the soil, murmuring "*Àdgilə-dedop'al, bəkhwə bdlt'eyt*, the Queen-Earth, we have returned to thee thy share". The following herbs are considered as particularly healing: (*a*) *ajmshyə-rshwəga, Arum albispatum*,[1] literally denoting: *ajmshyə*, eyebrow; *ashwəga*, "that with which they paint (a paint)"; it is used against diphtheria and scarlet fever; (*b*) *aztqyil* or *abgar ləmha, Aristolochia pontica*[1] (birthwort); the second Abkhasian term denotes, literally, "jackal's ear," used against erysipelas (St. Anthony's fire); and (*c*) *ajaqwa*, veratrum, according to Tchubinov (Geo. *Kharis-dziva*). Having finished gathering, they return home in silence and without looking back.

Maundy Thursday is called by the Abkhasians *tchatchkhadəl*, derived, in all probability, from the Megrelian *tsashkha didi*, "the great Thursday."

5. *Jaja*[2]

On Maundy Thursday the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the goddess of fruitfulness (of husbandry and horticulture) called *Jaja*. For this occasion the Abkhasian women prepare all sorts of lenten dishes, taking care always to include a pumpkin. The dishes are placed outside the house, in a corn-field, the offering to *Jaja* being accompanied by a supplication as follows: "The great *Jaja*! We have done all that was required of us, and have made the customary offering. We therefore humbly entreat thee to show thy bounty towards us and grant us a good harvest in the field and in the kitchen garden!" As I have stated before, the Abkhasians have no set prayer formulas, and each prays as best he can.

As always, the offering is left for a few minutes wherever it was placed, and the supplicants stand before it, and watch with emotion how the spirit of the goddess invisibly satiates herself with the gifts of men! Needless to say they themselves consume the "remains".

As I have already remarked, there are two Abkhasian gods of fruitfulness: the god *Andə'a-nəga* and the goddess *Jaja*.[3] *Jaja*, as imagined by an Abkhaz, is a broad-shouldered woman, of small stature. More than once Abkhasians have seen her wandering about the fields

[1] According to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden.

[2] It is of interest to elucidate what relation *Jaja* holds to Georgian *jojoba*; see I. Javakhishvili, *A History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian), p. 135.

[3] The relation of these two gods is difficult to determine; nor do we know the relation of *Jaja* to *Ayt'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

belonging to those who have failed to propitiate her, and muttering: 776
"Corncobs (of Indian corn) of a digit size, corncobs of a digit size!" 241
But if the owner of the field succeeds in frightening her and making her say *ràki, dzakì, ràki dzakì*, "of a cubit size," he will have a magnificent harvest.

On the day of *tchatchkhadòl*, after the offering has been made to *Jaja*, the seeds are taken for the first time into the kitchen garden.

6. *Àmshap'*

Easter Day is celebrated with great solemnity by all the 796
Abkhasians. It must be noted that the Abkhasians to-day have no notion whatever of the Christian conception of this day. Even the greeting, "Christ is risen," usual on this day, is wanting in the Abkhasian language. Everyone able to afford it has a new dress made for this day. To emphasize the poverty of a person the Abkhaz says, "Even for *Àmshap'* he could not get himself new clothes." This is almost the only day when an Abkhaz considers it necessary to send to church at least one of the members of his family. And the service in the church begins early enough to enable it to be finished by sun- [782]
rise. Everyone is in haste to be the first to light a wax candle and to [769]
place a painted egg on the graves of their dead. The Muhammadan Abkhasians also follow this custom, although they do not light the candles. It is known that Abkhasians bury their dead near their [764]
homes, in the places favoured by the deceased, and the graves, therefore, are scattered about the village. Owing to this custom the whole village is illuminated on this day of *Àmshap'*.

On this day each family must slaughter some animal. And those [782]
of the Abkhasians who follow the established custom of Paschal offerings, immolate two or three animals according to what his obligation is, what he "owes"—this word denotes "obliged", "must", "owes".

(*a*) *Antswakhwò* (or *Antswahwa*).

This is a compound word, consisting of *Antswà*, God, and (*a*)-*khwò*, part, share, and denoting "share of God", "for God", more exactly "to render to God that which is due to Him", briefly "praying to God". On this day most of the Abkhasians reverently offer up their prayers to God; but not all of them. There are families who are "not obliged" to render to God "His share". I have already mentioned 776
that the Abkhasian makes offerings only to those gods under whose power his parents or he himself had come, and thus had become his tributary, so to speak. Very often separate members of a family have, in addition to the general family guardian-gods, their own personal

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

guardians, whose power extends to his descendants, but not to those of his brothers or sisters. In the village of Adzvibzha almost everyone is obliged to carry out this " praying to God ", Christians as well as Muhammadans.

Every Abkhaz keeps in his cellar, in honour of " God ", a special pitcher filled with must of the very best grade. However great his need, an Abkhaz will not, for any consideration in the world, open this " sacrificial " pitcher until the celebration of the cult of " praying to God ".[1] Early in the morning, on returning from the church, the head of the family surrounded by the male members of his household, sacrifices a young he-goat over the " sacrificial " pitcher, and entreats " the great God to receive graciously the humble offering made by him in accordance with the instructions of his forefathers . . ." He humbly entreats the Great God " punish us not for our faults and trespasses ", etc. After this the meat of the immolated goat is boiled, and sacrificial wheat-cakes are baked. All this is taken down into the cellar, and placed in front of the sacrificial pitcher. The members of the family kneel down, while the head of the family reverently cleans and opens the pitcher, and, holding in his left hand a hazel stick upon which the heart and liver of the goat are transfixed, he prays *Antwsa-du* (to great God) that He grant him and his family a long and happy life. In his prayer he never fails to mention that they are performing the rite " in the manner they were taught by their fathers and grandfathers ". Afterwards he fills a glass with wine from the pitcher and pours it on the heart and liver and the sacrificial cakes; he then passes the latter, with the wine, three times over the heads of the supplicants who are kneeling down, and says: " Grant us the warmth of Thine eyes and of Thine heart! Protect us from all infirmities and sickness." Then follows again the libation of wine Now they all rise, turn round from right to left, and each places a piece of frankincense on burning coals. For a few minutes they all stand still humbly, while the great God " receives " their offerings, and then, with strict observation of order of seniority, a glass of wine and a small piece of the heart and liver is given to each of the participants. It should be noted that only the household members are allowed to partake of these sacrificial offerings. Even the married daughters of the family are treated as strangers, and they are not allowed to share in the offerings with their husbands and children. It is sinful even to think of the sale of the wine. In most of the families the female sex is generally forbidden to partake of this offering.

Thus do the Abkhasians perform annually the domestic offering to God of " His share ". But every three to five years each Abkhas

[1] The same applies to other " sacrificial pitchers " referred to below.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

is obliged to present "His share" (offering) to God, in a forest, for which purpose a clearing is chosen under the shadow of a tree, oak or yoke-elm. Here is offered usually a castrated goat the age of which is equal to the number of years since the Abkhaz last prayed in the forest. Women are not allowed to take part in this rite, although they help to prepare the sacrificial cakes. The prayer is said by the elder of the *gvari*, who receives the hide of the immolated animal. The offering takes place in front of *ashwamkyát'* (described above). The prayer ceremonial is the same as in the case of the domestic offering, although the pitcher of wine kept in the cellar is not used; for the purpose of the oblation a little wine is brought in a smaller pitcher. All the men in the neighbourhood participate in the ceremony, and when it is over they seat themselves on the grass; herbage is placed in front of them, and on this is served the dinner. A small piece of the heart and liver of the immolated animal is given to each of the participants. All the sacrificial food must be consumed on the spot; nothing may be taken home. The horns of the victim are hung high above the *ashwamkyát'* and left there. Three legs of *ashwamkyát'* are then cut, and the assembly disperses.

Some families dedicate to *Antswahwà* cows which are let loose with perforated ears (see above, p. 125); these cows are called *adzatwà*, which is difficult to translate; it apparently denotes "pledge", "security". Bullocks born of these cows are offered in sacrifice in place of castrated goats.

(*b*) *Aylòr-nòkha.*

On the same day, simultaneously with *Antswakhwà*, a sacrifice is offered to *Ayòlr-nòkha* (*Ilòr-nòkha*). The ceremony of offering the sacrifice is exactly similar to that described above. There is the same "wine pitcher", goat, cakes, and the same manner of praying. Also, at certain intervals, the sacrifice is made in the woods, in the manner described above. Many keep *adzatw* cows in honour of the Ilori icon. The only difference being that women have a freer access to these offerings than to *Antswakhwà*. Here I will note that if the pitcher for the "sacrificial wine" becomes in any way damaged (even if only slightly chipped), a new one, larger and dearer, must be substituted without fail. This is a general rule for all pitchers of this kind.

Aylòr-nòkha (*Ilòr-nòkha*) denotes the "icon of Ilori". This appears to be the same icon of St. George, which is kept in the small, walled-in church of the village of Ilori. This village is situated on the seashore, three miles from Otchemtchire. What is this Ilori icon? Which saint does it represent? For what is this saint remarkable? The contemporary Abkhaz has no notion whatever. The masses do not know to this day that it is the image of St. George. All they know

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

[778] is that the Ilori " icon " is omnipotent, and they, therefore, try hard not to incur its wrath. It is inflexibly just and punishes harshly those who deviate from the law; it is a goddess of equity, as it were; a [778 GR] kind of Themis, and in the practical life of the southern Abkhasians and of the Samurzaqanoans, there is, therefore, no " saint ", no [690] " icon ", no deity equal to the Ilori " icon "; it determines finally and irrevocably all matters, whether civil or criminal, which the crown court has not been able to settle to the satisfaction of the popular idea of fair play. Even in the case of matters upon which judgment has been passed by crown courts, but where the decision has not satisfied the disputing parties, appeal is made to its tribunal. The trial is conducted as follows: A kind of arbitration court is set up which imposes upon [788] the accused the obligation to take a propitiatory oath before the Ilori " icon ". If the matter is unimportant it is determined by a village tribunal which provides one or two co-swearers; but if the matter is serious (insult to one's honour, murder, etc.) the representatives of the parties participate in the trial with the judges. " Swearing in " follows, but the number of co-swearers increases; thus, for instance, 1–2 *t'avadi-s*, 2–3 *aznauri-s*, 5–6 peasants, 1–2 namesakes, 1–2 maternal relations, 1–2 relations of the female line of the *gvari*, etc., are frequently appointed as co-swearers. The oath is administered on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*. The accused swears before the icon that he is innocent, the co-swearers confirm his declaration, and there the matter ends. If the accused is unable to take the oath, he submits obediently to the punishment imposed upon him. From the day of the taking of the oath onwards the plaintiff breaks off all relationship with the defendant and his co-swearers. " The icon is between us (parts, separates us)," says the orthodox Abkhaz. It is impossible to evade this custom; it is an Abkhasian's profound conviction that infringement of this custom (the re-establishment of relationship), as also [686] a false oath, will not pass unpunished; the " icon " punishes with [653] sickness and even with death, if the accused does not come to his senses in time and confess himself in the wrong. At the death of all the members of the guilty family, the wrath of the " icon " recoils on the plaintiff. To avert the chastisement of the " icon ", as of Abkhasian gods in general, the guilty person must pray and make offerings to the " icon "; he must also compensate his opponent's material losses and obtain the latter's consent thereto; they both set out for Ilori with gifts, prescribed by sorceresses, and they pray there to the " icon " for forgiveness of their sins; they bring goats, bullocks, and money. This is called the reciprocal forgiveness-prayer (*eyba-nəẖwara*). From this day normal relations are restored between the parties. If one of the parties does not agree to make peace, the other party can *akhə-dchəkhəra*, " buy back his head," i.e. redeem

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

ox of a certain colour. If the miracles you talk so much about are true, it should be an easy matter for St. George to bring my ox into this church to-night; then, certainly, I will gladly embrace your Faith.' The condition was accepted. On the following morning, early, on opening the gates, there was found within the enclosure an ox which the unbeliever recognized as his own. Thus he was convinced of his error, and embraced the Christian Faith."[1]

(c) *Indl-qwùba.*

The *T'avadi*-s Marshania, and all those Abkhasians who descended from the mountains (Dsabalaa, Dalaa, Pskhvu, etc.), offer sacrifices (a ram, without fail) in exactly the same manner to a sanctity, *Indl-qwùba*, instead of to the Ilori "icon". I could obtain no information of any kind about this "icon". Everybody I questioned gave the same answer: *Indl-qwùba* is equal in power to *Dedòrəp'sh* and the Ilori "icon".

These offerings are performed early in the morning, and serve as breakfasts. Every Abkhaz slaughters some animal for the meal (the favourite one is a castrated goat), it is often prepared on the Saturday. They also pay the customary Paschal visits. After the midday sacrificial meal they all go to the public square, where they indulge in games, chiefly football. During Easter week they also organize horse racing, the most popular sport of the Abkhasians.

7. *The Second Day of Easter*

This is a commemoration day. A variety of dishes are prepared, all of which are placed on a table by an open window. The eldest of the family, holding a candle and a glass of wine in his hands, prays to the souls of deceased relatives that they grant his family peace and happiness. Then follows the pouring of wine on the meat and wheat dishes. The whole family stand behind the supplicant. After the prayer each member approaches, places a piece of frankincense on burning embers, and pours wine on the food. Here stands too a smoking pipe. All remain seated in silence, in order that the souls of the deceased ancestors may eat in peace.[2]

The Abkhasian, as has already been stated, have no Paschal greeting such as "Christ is risen". They welcome each other with a kiss, saying: "May God grant us that we meet again next year," to which the other replies: "And for a hundred years."

[1] Quoted from the Russian and Georgian translation of A. Lamberti's *Relatione della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia nella quale si tratta dell'Origine, costumi e Cosi naturali di quei Paesi.* Published in Naples, 1654.

[2] This rite will be described in detail in my work *The Cult of the Ancestors.*

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

8. *Thursday of Easter Week*

(*dsatchòkhur, mardydni t'argyalàz*)

796 On the Thursday of Easter week the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice [796] to *dsatchòkhur, mardydni t'argyalàz*. I do not know what the first word denotes. *Mardydni* is the Megrelian *mardiani* (Geo. *madliani*) and denotes "beneficent", "blessed", "abundant"; while *t'argyalàz* is derived from the Georgian word *mt'avar-angelozi*, archangel; it is not clear, however, which of the archangels is meant. According to the explanation of the Commission, this "icon" punishes the offending family by causing the death, in particular, of children. "If there are children in the family, it does not touch the adults," commented the Commission. Sacrifice to this "icon" is always offered by an oak tree. On the Thursday, early in the morning, sacrificial cakes are baked, and the whole family repair to their oak, which is usually situated nearby within the enclosure. Everybody kneels, [789] facing eastward, and the head of the family makes a bloodless offering consisting of *akwakwàr* and cakes, and entreats the great Dsatchkhur, the beneficent T'argialaz, to forgive them their trespasses, voluntary or involuntary. *Àämen* say the whole family. The oak tree is decorated [804] with pieces of many coloured stuffs, some fastened with nails and [778] some with wax. This oak is sacred and to fell, damage, or defile it is strictly forbidden.

On the same day, in the evening, but this time at home, the family [790] make a blood offering to *T'argyalàz*. A fattened capon is immolated and cakes are again baked. Some families keep pitchers with "sacrificial wine" in his honour.

"In ancient times when people were not so depraved, T'argialaz [789] procured for the day of offering a wild he-goat as his victim," Osman Kamkia informed me, "just as the Ilori 'icon' procured an ox. Now he no longer does so, for we are not worthy of his favours!" concluded the old man, sighing. The peasants Kamkia are *me-khat-ur-n-i* (Geo.), i.e. "attendants of the 'icon'." They keep a little cottage (*p'atskha*) [778] where the "god" is supposed to dwell invisibly. A money-box is kept in the cottage, into which the faithful drop copper coins used exclusively for the purchase of sacrificial offerings.

An old Megrelian, whose name has unfortunately become effaced in my note-book, told me the following:—

778 "The all-powerful and miraculous icon, Dsatchkhur, was removed 789 by the Svans from the Salkhino church, and taken to Svanet'i, where it remained for a long time; in the end, however, moved by pity for the Megrelians, the icon returned of its own accord and alighted on an oak which stands on the picturesque hill of Salkhino. Near this

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwza-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwza-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nəhwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nəhwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nəhwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nəhwa* (*anəhwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-ɟ*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateyna, in the *Collobotator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

796 [969] On this day also they "lay the table", that is, prepare a dinner, for the souls of the deceased, unless the day happens to be one of abstinence, i.e. Wednesday or Friday. In the latter event the feast takes place on the following day.

(e) *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa*

On the same day of the Assumption is observed *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa* (cf. II (10)). The children are taken to a meadow where they are told to place their right legs against a tree. Each holding an *akwakwdr* in the right hand, they remain meekly in this position until the eldest in the family has addressed the prayer to "the spirit of the tree", entreating "the great part of the deity of the tree" to safeguard them from giddiness, from falling off the tree, and from injuries. The children must eat their *akwakwdr* without removing their legs from the tree.

(f) *Andna-gùnda* (the goddess of bees)

796 231 This is both a spring and a summer feast.

In the spring, when the bees begin to hive, the eldest ("pure") woman of the family takes some hirse (Geo. *p'etvi*) and an egg, and [794] enters the apiary, where she passes the offerings three times over the hives, and prays to the goddess of the bees, *Andna-gùnda*: "Submitting these as a pledge that the established offering will be made at the proper time, I humbly entreat thee, *Andna-gùnda*, to be the guardian of our bees; safeguard them from all illnesses, multiply them, and grant them a good crop!" Hirse and the egg are hung over the apiary.

In the summer, between the 15th July and the end of August, before the gathering of the first honeycombs, more during August, on a Thursday or Saturday, the promised offering to the goddess [780] *Andna-gùnda* is made. A large corncake (*a-mgal*), stuffed with cheese, is baked, and placed on one of the hives; also an egg. The family kneel in front of the offering, and the "pure" woman again invokes the mercy of *Andna-gùnda* upon the honey bees, and says an improvised prayer. The family repeat a long drawn out *dämen*.

After the ceremony, she divides the corncakes crosswise, into four parts, with two strokes of the knife; and cuts these into smaller pieces. The family sit down there and then and dine. They do not [621] forget the neighbours, sending a small piece each. The remains are placed in a basket and hung up in the apiary. Everybody passing by is obliged to enter the apiary and bless the honey bees and, scattering about a little hirse, eat a piece of corncake.

[178] In ancient times when the Abkhasians irreproachably observed all the rites, the gods were more merciful to them. Thus, the goddess

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

of the bees as a sign of her good disposition towards a given family placed an egg (the egg of *Anàna-gùnda*) in one of the hives. No matter how much honey they took from that hive, there would always be a plentiful supply of it.[1]

IV. K'IRSA

Christmas is one of the four chief holidays[2] of the year. Abkhasians call it *K'irsa* (Megr. *K'irse*), which denotes Christ. An Abkhaz considers it a great disgrace if he fails on this day to kill a goat or some other animal. On this day " the table is laid " also for the souls of ancestors.

(*a*) *Agwə-nə̀hwa*

For some families it is obligatory to make an offering early in the morning on this day to *Agwə-nə̀hwa*, for which *akwakwər* are baked. The supplicant entreats that *Agwə-nə̀hwa* grant them the warmth of his eyes and his heart. In translation the word denotes, " praying to heart." This " praying " is also known to the Gurians, under the name of " praying for the womb " (Geo. *Mutslis salotsavi*); Megrelians call it *Khatsitsi*.[3] According to I. Kipshidze, it is the New Year's Day breakfast.[4] In my opinion it is nothing more than a survival of the supplication described below.

(*b*) *Got'anùa* (*sharp'ə-nə̀hwa*)

Some *gvari*-s have preserved to this day the following custom. On Christmas Eve, the family go to bed very early; they rise, however, at midnight, and begin praying. Enough chickens are killed to provide one for every member of the family (blackbirds also may be used) or in their place a young goat; *akwakwər* baked. All this is offered to *Got'anùa*; the food is consumed immediately after the prayer is ended, and the remains, if any, are not left but burnt without fail. All return to bed. The dawn must find them asleep. In Megrelian *got'anua* denotes morning-twilight, dawn, to grow light, to dawn, the Abkhasian equivalent of which is *sharp'-nə̀hwa*, the morning prayer; the Megrelian term, however, is more in use.

I quote here the following story: " A female slave of a family,

[1] *Anàna*, in my opinion, is derived from *an*, mother; *gùnda*, probably from *gundi*, a swarm, a collection of something.

[2] Namely, the New Year, Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas.

[3] *Khatsitsi—khatsitsi* is called also a bride. (Cf. I. Kipshidze, *Gram. of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. *khat'etsi*.) (Ed. *Khrist. Vostok.*)

[4] *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. (where is also a reference to the explanation of the same word in Georgian by V. Beridze, *Sitqvishona*, s.v., Ed. *Kh. V.*).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzv16zha

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family, being angry with her masters, took a portion of the dough for *akwakwdr* destined for the "god" *Got'anùa*, and placing it in a scoop of bitter-gourd (*akwapey*, Geo. *kopé*), hid it in the loft. As usual the family went to bed after the ceremony. But unfortunately for them the offended *Got'anùa* soundly thrashed all of them, using for the purpose the very same scoop in which had been hidden the dough destined for himself. This *gvari* makes propitiatory offerings at the will of sorcerers to *Got'anùa* twice a year, during the night before Christmas and before the Assumption.

Got'anùa, under the name of *Okhvdmuri*, evidently spread throughout Megrelia during the missionaryship of Lamberti.[1]

V. Deities whose Cults have no Fixed Dates

1. *Et-nɔ̀khа—Àga-nɔ̀khа*

The sea, like other manifestations of nature, has its own "part of deity", called *Àga-inkhwɔ̀* or *dga-intswakhwɔ̀*. An Abkhaz makes an offering to this deity when he goes to the sea coast for any considerable time. The sea deity is not to be trifled with; if it is slighted it becomes turbulent, it surges, and punishes the unrespectful. Therefore even the children are forbidden to throw pebbles, or to spit into the sea. The worship of this deity has been preserved in its purest form among the Bzib Abkhasians, namely among the peasantry of the Gudout (Gudaut) district, of the *gvari* of Amp'aràa. It has been described by A. Tch(ukbar), in *Sotrudnik Zakavkazskoy Missii* ("The Collabarator of the Transcaucasian Mission"), 1912, p. 373 sqq., where the deity *Et-nɔ̀kh-Àga-nɔ̀khа* is called *Et-nykh Ag-Nykh*. *Àga* denotes sea, *(a)nɔ̀kh*—"icon."[2] But what does the word *Et* denote?[2]

2. *Àshkha-intswakhwɔ̀* (god of mountains)

Mountains also have "their part of God" known under the name of *Àshkha-intswakhwɔ̀*. *Àshkha* denotes mountain; *intswakhwɔ̀*, "his (of the male rational being) part of God." I have pointed out above that the Abkhaz often uses the word *nɔ̀khа* in the sense of god, which in the Christian faith is understood, or more correctly, translated, as icon. The god of mountains "governs" all the mountains and the beasts inhabiting them. Abkhaz shepherds make offerings to this god twice a year, in the spring when they drive the cattle to the mountains, and in the autumn when they drive them back. To him are subject also mountain game. In order to preserve the game from

[1] A. Lamberti, op. cit., pp. 148-9.

[2] This word manifests a consonance with the Assyro-Babylonian name of the god of the sea, *Ea*. Is this a mere coincidence?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

who transgress against him. In order to avoid incurring the anger of this god, an Abkhaz will not draw water or wash himself when the rainbow is in the sky, and is generally careful about the use of water. Like any other god, *Àtswaqwa* may bestow the " warmth of his eyes and his heart ", in return for offerings and prayers. Whoever is affected by his wrath, grows icteritious, emaciated, to save his life he must, at the direction of the sorceresses, make the following offering to the rainbow god :—

On one of the Thursdays [1] the old (" pure ") women take the sick person to the river, pass (Geo. *shemoavleben*) around his head 4–5 yards of variegated chintz, and pray : " The great god ! Acknowledging his transgressions this sick person (the name is mentioned) has appeared before thee, and humbly entreats thee to accept this chintz as a pledge that he will perform the established offering at the proper time, at the direction of the sorceresses ! "

On the following Thursday he is taken again to the same river and place. Usually three women say the prayer, but there may be seven. Men, with the exception of the patient, are not allowed to be present at this ceremony. The sick person is dressed entirely in white. The eldest woman [2] kills a capon and a hen ; women carry out all the duties, preparing *ashwamkydt'*, " *ghomi* " (millet pudding), *akwakwàr*, and *atcha-gvazàl* (Geo. *ghvezeli*, an oblong bread), of each of which there must be seven of the usual, and seven of the very small size. All these are placed on *ashwamkydt'*, on which also burn seven wax candles. The prayer is said by the eldest woman. The patient kneels in front of the offering ; he is taken home immediately the ceremony is over, and he must not look back. The seven small *akwakwàr*, *atcha-gvazàl*, and seven small portions of *ghomi* (*abòst'a*—millet porridge), are thrown into the water ; they represent the share of the female slaves (*aht'ap'hwòs*) of the rainbow god. Everything else is consumed by the women themselves ; the remains being thrown into the river, for nothing must be taken home.

Muhammadans must also burn candles at this offering. The candles are fixed on a kind of hoop made of grape vine. At the end of the ceremony the hoop with the burning candles is thrown into the river.

It should be noted that in some parts of the country this god is called *Àtswaqwa-òlia* (the Rainbow-Eliah). So at least he was called, according to the testimony of D. I. Gulia, by Javaz, the famous woman supplicant.

[1] Thursday in Megrelian is *tsashkhe*, the day of the sky. It is noteworthy that the Abkhasians perform usually on the day of the sky, the majority of rites that are seemingly connected with the sky, as in the case given.

[2] The Abkhasian women kill animals only on occasions of certain offerings.

/41 cont./

515 782 823 [783] Fearing to defile it, the Abkhaz avoids bathing in running water; if he bathes, upon coming out /42/ of the water he takes three stones and says, "I sinned against you today; I went into the water and bathed, but you, forgive me." With this prayer, he passes the pebbles around his head with his hands and throws them into the water.

3.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Rainbow

753 [755] [782] The ceremony in honor of the rainbow, which is not obligatory for all, is performed for the greater part on persons whose sickness, according to the female fortune-teller, is caused by the rainbow. A prolonged yellowness of the face, a weakening of the organism, instability of character -- the [821] Abkhaz attributes all these to the fact that the sick person entered water at the very moment when the rainbow was drinking from it.

755 782 "Sinless" old women, having planned a sacrifice and promised a prayer, lead the sick person out to a brook; they take with them two fried capons, two stuffed loaves of unleavened bread in the shape of a tongue, and other provisions, as in the performance of the ceremony in honor of the water. On both sides of the brook, clean objects are laid out, such as clothes, silver, etc., a little bridge made of thread is thrown over the river from one bank to another. Having prepared all this, the praying-woman, with a doll that has been prepared beforehand in her hands, walks around the sick person, who is kneeling down covered with a piece of calico, and prays for him to the rainbow, known by the name Eliaphshi; then she takes a candle and addresses a similar prayer to the "Mistress Mother of the Water," and her "lord husband." After praying over the provisions she takes some [789] of each dish and throws it into the water; she places the doll in a pumpkin, and, after adorning the latter with lighted

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Ad2.VI.b2h9

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. Àyt'ar-nòhwa*

1. *Jabrán*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nòhwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nòhwa*, which is derived from *a-nòhwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nòhwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabrán*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashò* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswò*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəa*, a combination of *adswò*, a stick with a tapering end, and *ərsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'hwəs-tsk'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "h" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "hw" represents a labialized variety of "h". [Translator's Note.]

† The combination "*dsw*" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "*ds*". For this latter sound see p. 329 (*h'*). [Translator's Note.]

[1] N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskoe Chtenie*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.

(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashò* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaẖwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; *dsdsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ẖwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the house, *dishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àămən*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwəyt'ar! bzhyə-nəkhak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[1] *Alaẖwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *hwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *govorit* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Àyt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *Àn, Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Àyt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are included in both pleiades.

3: Janashia 1-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZha

small salt *akwakwàr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Làmilakh* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Làmilakh* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwàr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyəbir* (in Geo. *riktap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abala*.

[1] *Anasp'a dsw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dsadsola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-satskhela*. The word *a-bala*, in Abkhasian *a-mərtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik iedki*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *The Gathering of Medicinal Herbs*

On Maundy Thursday, young maidens, led by old women, go into a forest early before the dawn, to gather medicinal herbs. They must neither converse nor look back. When they dig out the herb, they throw salt into the soil, murmuring "*Àdgilə-dedop'al, bəkhwə bdlt'eyt*, the Queen-Earth, we have returned to thee thy share". The following herbs are considered as particularly healing: (*a*) *ajmshyə-rshwəga, Arum albispatum*,[1] literally denoting: *ajmshyə*, eyebrow; *ashwəga*, "that with which they paint (a paint)"; it is used against diphtheria and scarlet fever; (*b*) *aztqyil* or *abgar ləmha, Aristolochia pontica*[1] (birthwort); the second Abkhasian term denotes, literally, "jackal's ear," used against erysipelas (St. Anthony's fire); and (*c*) *ajaqwa*, veratrum, according to Tchubinov (Geo. *Kharis-dzira*). Having finished gathering, they return home in silence and without looking back.

Maundy Thursday is called by the Abkhasians *tchatchkhadəl*, derived, in all probability, from the Megrelian *tsashkha didi*, "the great Thursday."

5. *Jaja*[2]

On Maundy Thursday the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the goddess of fruitfulness (of husbandry and horticulture) called *Jaja*. For this occasion the Abkhasian women prepare all sorts of lenten dishes, taking care always to include a pumpkin. The dishes are placed outside the house, in a corn-field, the offering to *Jaja* being accompanied by a supplication as follows: "The great *Jaja*! We have done all that was required of us, and have made the customary offering. We therefore humbly entreat thee to show thy bounty towards us and grant us a good harvest in the field and in the kitchen garden!" As I have stated before, the Abkhasians have no set prayer formulas, and each prays as best he can.

As always, the offering is left for a few minutes wherever it was placed, and the supplicants stand before it, and watch with emotion how the spirit of the goddess invisibly satiates herself with the gifts of men! Needless to say they themselves consume the "remains".

As I have already remarked, there are two Abkhasian gods of fruitfulness: the god *Andə'a-nəga* and the goddess *Jaja*.[3] *Jaja*, as imagined by an Abkhaz, is a broad-shouldered woman, of small stature. More than once Abkhasians have seen her wandering about the fields

[1] According to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden.

[2] It is of interest to elucidate what relation *Jaja* holds to Georgian *jojoba*; see I. Javakhishvili, *A History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian), p. 138.

[3] The relation of these two gods is difficult to determine; nor do we know the relation of *Jaja* to *Ayt'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

who transgress against him. In order to avoid incurring the anger of this god, an Abkhaz will not draw water or wash himself when the rainbow is in the sky, and is generally careful about the use of water. Like any other god, *Àtswaqwa* may bestow the " warmth of his eyes and his heart ", in return for offerings and prayers. Whoever is affected by his wrath, grows icteritious, emaciated, to save his life he must, at the direction of the sorceresses, make the following offering to the rainbow god :—

On one of the Thursdays [1] the old (" pure ") women take the sick person to the river, pass (Geo. *shemoavleben*) around his head 4–5 yards of variegated chintz, and pray : " The great god ! Acknowledging his transgressions this sick person (the name is mentioned) has appeared before thee, and humbly entreats thee to accept this chintz as a pledge that he will perform the established offering at the proper time, at the direction of the sorceresses ! "

On the following Thursday he is taken again to the same river and place. Usually three women say the prayer, but there may be seven. Men, with the exception of the patient, are not allowed to be present at this ceremony. The sick person is dressed entirely in white. The eldest woman [2] kills a capon and a hen ; women carry out all the duties, preparing *ashwamkyàt'*, " *ghomi* " (millet pudding), *akwakwàr*, and *atcha-gvazàl* (Geo. *ghvezeli*, an oblong bread), of each of which there must be seven of the usual, and seven of the very small size. All these are placed on *ashwamkyàt'*, on which also burn seven wax candles. The prayer is said by the eldest woman. The patient kneels in front of the offering ; he is taken home immediately the ceremony is over, and he must not look back. The seven small *akwakwàr*, *atcha-gvazàl*, and seven small portions of *ghomi* (*abɔ̀st'a*—millet porridge), are thrown into the water ; they represent the share of the female slaves (*aħt'əp'ħwɔ̀s*) of the rainbow god. Everything else is consumed by the women themselves ; the remains being thrown into the river, for nothing must be taken home.

Muhammadans must also burn candles at this offering. The candles are fixed on a kind of hoop made of grape vine. At the end of the ceremony the hoop with the burning candles is thrown into the river.

It should be noted that in some parts of the country this god is called *Àtswaqwa-ɔ̀lia* (the Rainbow-Eliah). So at least he was called, according to the testimony of D. I. Gulia, by Javaz, the famous woman supplicant.

[1] Thursday in Megrelian is *tsashkha*, the day of the sky. It is noteworthy that the Abkhasians perform usually on the day of the sky, the majority of rites that are seemingly connected with the sky, as in the case given.

[2] The Abkhasian women kill animals only on occasions of certain offerings.

/29 cont./

765 the table at every breakfast and supper.

On the fortieth day, or on one of the Saturdays, the mourning banquet for the deceased is held. A ram is killed and meat dishes are prepared. The relatives of the deceased, who up to [785] this time have been fasting, do not break their fast until this day. The mother and the foster mother, however, fast for a whole year.

The second mourning-banquet involves even greater expenditures. This banquet is called aphskhuvra /see foreign text/ (1).

1. aphs = soul; khu = lot, order; vra = to do, to carry out; i.e., the giving of the banquet in honor of the soul of the deceased.

On this occasion animals are killed, much is spent, and an effort is made to satisfy the soul of the deceased as well as possible. [795] The Abkhaz are convinced that an unsatisfied soul can harm not only their property, but also themselves. This banquet is held in the second year after the death of the departed, more often in the autumn when there is an abundance of everything.

For the day of the aphskhuvra guests are invited to bewail the deceased. Sometimes mamla (horse-races) are also organized [541] on this same day in honor of the deceased. If the races have been [202] planned beforehand, everybody is informed in good time by messengers. Meanwhile the hosts are preparing ample supplies of provisions, animals, wine, cheese, bread, etc. On the eve of the aphskhuvra, the belongings of the deceased are on display, and the horse of the departed is tethered near them, covered with a mourning blanket. The deceased's weapons are hung on the saddle of his horse, his rifle, pstol, dagger, saber, whip, etc.; subsequently there is lamentation at the grave with the remains.

And then this scene takes place: a crowd of people of both [302] sexes stand around, barefoot and in mourning. The men's hair is braided, as is the women's. People on foot and on horseback [262] approach them, each of them leading one or two bulls, or a few

/35 cont./

upon the summit of the mountain Tabakona. They are divided into groups according to their degree of power: the younger ones usually travel upon mice, frogs, cats, etc., the older ones on foxes, wolves, etc. On Assumption Eve they are all obliged to gather upon the Tabakona for the annual report of their deeds to their sovereign, Roskipi, and to produce material proof of their industrious service -- a heart taken from a man or animal, a liver, eyes, nails, hair, etc. To avoid attack from witches, the Abkhaz take the following measures: during the fast of the Assumption they erect crosses and stick candles in their hair, and on the eve of the Assumption they shoot off rifles, sing, and spend the whole night in vigil. The Abkhaz believes that a witch can simultaneously be at home, among people, and on top of the mountain Tabakona. The Abkhaz explain such a splitting-up of a person by saying that it is not the witch herself that wanders about, but her accessory soul (aphschchda = superfluous soul).

2.

The True God -- Paganism -- The Principal and Secondary Gods of the Abkhaz -- Causes of Polytheism -- "Creators" and "Forgers" -- Fate or Predestination.

To assist the supreme being, endowed with all the qualities with which, according to our understanding, God is endowed, says Mr. A., Abkhaz mythology added a number of other deities, assigning to each his particular designation. These assisting deities, according to their understanding, were created by the Almighty before man and the universe came into being, and people at prayer appeal through them to God himself. God himself never descends to earth, but if he needs to punish someone or to grant someone his grace, he sends out one of his assistants. In the prayers which are said and sung at sacrifices and other

/37 cont./

777 been born; God save me from such a marriage." And so he
776 planned to kill the newborn baby; when everyone in the
539 house had fallen asleep, he slipped quietly in, carried the child out, ripped open her belly, and threw it upon the flat roof of the hut. Then the two thieves went on their way. The child's wailing awakened the women, who found her, sewed up the wound with silk thread, and thus saved her from death. And no matter how hard the thief about whom the above-mentioned prophecy was made tried to find a wife, he was /38/ unsuccessful. Meanwhile the girl who he thought was dead reached marriageable age and one day somehow met the thief. He immediately fell in love with her and married her. Then it was shown how inevitably every predestination and decision made by the "creator-forgers" is fulfilled.

VII.

Prayers in Honor of the Deities

782 Prayer is the name given to those religious ceremonies and rites accompanied by sacrifices in honor of the gods which are performed according to a definite pattern set and sanctified from olden times.

[776] Each deity may independently show, within his sphere of activity, grace or wrath toward man; for instance, he may send sickness or misfortune on him or his cattle, etc.
• [787] The Abkhaz easily determine by special signs whether the deities' anger is the result of deviations from the fixed pattern
[688] of the religious rites. To avert the wrath of the gods caused by omissions in prayers and sacrifices, they must repeat the offerings and complete whatever was omitted the first time; uncorrected omissions and mistakes in ritual weigh heavily as guilt felt toward the angry gods, even upon generations
[755] far-removed from the sinners. If anyone falls ill in conse-
[753] quence of neglect in ritual toward one or another god, he must offer him a sacrifice in order to recover. If he is

/48 cont./

753 "hung on the girls' ears." Rheumatic pains in the knees, instability of character, general weakness of the organism of a person, etc. -- all these are consequences of a 789 "weighty cause." To avert the sickness, a button is fastened to the ear like an earring. An innocent and sinless woman 755 leads the ailing person to a nut-bush and makes him kneel; 782 she drives seven /49/ sticks of nut-wood into the ground around him, fastens a lighted candle to each of them, and prays [776] on behalf of the sick person to hanipha, the genius, walking along the rocks.

18.

Prayer in Honor of the Supreme Being

776 753 This supreme being is believed to be the cause of all kinds of sickness in man. When the body-temperature of a seriously sick person fluctuates greatly and he is alternately thrown into a fever and chills, when he faints or loses consciousness and regains it momentarily, and then begins to toss and become delirious, to sing songs, to mumble prayers, etc., the Abkhaz believe that all these severe pathological conditions are unmistakable signs of action by a superior force, by the supreme deities (Antsa r mzz) on the sick person -- "there is a divine cause." The Abkhaz are convinced that this "divine cause" has taken up its abode in the sick person and therefore they say, Antsa drthoup, i.e., "a god 755 came to visit." When the female fortune-teller confirms [787] that the cause of the sickness is indeed that "a god took up his abode" in the sick person, then everyone in the house must assume a gay appearance and rejoice instead of grieving, for "where the god has taken up his abode, there can be nothing but rejoicing." Therefore the village youth gathers in the house of such a patient and all begin to sing and dance, and even the sick person is made to take part in the dances and singing, if he is strong enough to do so.

[782] The prayer-sacrifice is carried out near the house on the edge of a forest. The offering is a goat or a kid, a

/54 cont./

776 falsely the name of Aphi, who commands the thunderstorms, cannot be punished by means of firearms or side arms, which make up the specialty of Shasha, etc.

782 326 Oaths to Shasha are of two kinds: in the smithy and under the open sky. In the first instance, the smith, having placed the hammer on the anvil and crossed his hands on his breast, stands to one side of it, the one swearing the oath on the other side of the anvil, opposite the smith, and the one concerning whose affairs the oath is being sworn stands to the side. The one swearing the oath, having taken the hammer into his hands, says: "If I am guilty of that of which they accuse me, then may Shasha smash open my head on the anvil"; upon these words, he hits the anvil three times with the hammer, and the oath is considered sworn. In the second 782 instance, two sticks are driven into the ground, one opposite the other; on them are hung loaded rifles whose muzzles are trained on the space occupied by the one swearing the oath; those present stand to the side. The one swearing the oath pronounces, "If I said a lie, may Shasha shoot bullets through my head /55/ from these rifles," and he walks through the space between the rifles three times.

755 782 326 At the first sign of sickness accompanied by headaches, the person who has taken a false oath asks his relatives to find out from a female fortune-teller the cause of his ailment. The fortune-teller, who has usually heard beforehand, from [787] the blacksmith himself about everyone who has taken an oath, throws some beans and looks at the stars, and then indicates the cause of the sickness: a false oath sworn to Shasha on such and such a day, in connection with such and such a matter, and in such and such a smithy. One of the ailing person's relatives goes to the person concerning whose affairs the false oath was sworn and by gifts induces him to pray to Shasha to forgive the patient, promising, of course, that upon recovery the patient will give him complete satisfaction. Then they both go to the smithy where the oath was taken, and the

[770 cont.]

755 might leave. As soon as the afflicted person is able, he himself goes to the water with a prayer-woman; there he kneels and [782] offers up a hen to the mother of the waters, a rooster to her husband, and a candle to each of them and to her female servant (Abza 'avabzatšav = benefactress, intercessor). The woman prays and strokes the sick person on the back for "deliverance" (azati).

If someone suffers from jaundice or debility, [771] the "irreproachable" elders lead him to the river, lay his clothing, silver articles, etc. on both banks, and make a bridge of twisted yarn over the river; the prayer-woman then circles the sick person with a doll and prays to the rainbow in the name of the Eliap'ši, to the mother of the waters, and to her husband. She [782] casts into the water pieces of the food that was brought along: roasted chickens, tongue-shaped flat cakes, etc., and she allows the doll to float downstream in a gourd with a burning candle, while she prays that the goddess amuse herself with it rather than with the sick person. Finally she gives the latter "deliverance," and he may not look back on the way home (cf. p. 924 f. [untranslated]).

231 789 When rinderpest struck, the Kemirkehe used to dig a tunnel in a steep river-bank and in the middle of this a pit in which they fastened a black cat with a silver belt. They covered the pit with boards and earth, ignited a fire on top by rubbing two sticks together, and drove the cattle through the river and the tunnel, to the accompaniment of the priests' litany. Afterwards the cat was freed.

842 The above-mentioned threefold prayer at the water is aimed at fertility when one "leads to the water" a young woman 849 for the first time, during which an egg is thrown in, and, in the case of a woman in childbed, food for the infant.

787 [821] The Abkhaz read signs for future events, for a favorable or unfavorable outcome for undertakings, from the stars, from the form of the moon, from meeting certain animals or human beings, and also, in the manner of the Tatars, from the cracks in a sheep's shoulder-blade that has been cast into the fire (see Vol. II, p. 325).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Aʒvibzha

thy heart! Grant us such a crop of maize that at its gathering we shall have to bend the stalks with a hook (Geo. *Kavi*), and cut them down with a bill!" *K'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà*) is then spilled, and the cattle is called by shouting *wootsw*. *Anàp'a-nàga* is the harvest god. In my opinion the etymology of these words is as follows: *Ap'arà* denotes "to twist or twine" something (a rope, for example), as well as "to pass with difficulty through something", for instance, a maize or millet field, crowd, etc.; *nàgara*—to carry: *inap'òo indgo*—carriest thou by forcing thy way, by pushing asunder.

There is also an evil spirit of the harvest called *Jaja*, but we will speak of her (she is a goddess) separately, as she is not a member of this septenary.

(g) *Atchshò-shyashyàna* (god of horses).

Finally, the supplicant takes the cake whose shape represents a horse (or three *à-khwazhwa*), and entreats (the god) *Atchshò shyashyàna* —the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, to increase his horses (donkeys and asses). Again *wootsw* and *ak'warpà*. The word *atchshò* denotes horse; *shwyashyàna* or *shashana* is incomprehensible.

With this ceremonial *Àyt'ar-nòwa* ends.

Judging from what has already been said above, it is clear that *Àyt'ar* is the head of a whole pleiade of gods, each of whom constitute a special part of him; it is noteworthy that in every supplication addressed to any one of these gods, *Àyt'ar* is also invariably referred to as one whose part is the deity in question. The religio-philosophical mind of the Abkhasians has arranged the hierarchy of these gods in the following order:—

ÀYT'AR: JABRÀN, ZHWÀBRÀN, ALÀSHKINTÈ, ÀMZA, ÀMRA, ANÀP'A-NÀGA; AND ATCHSHÈ-SHYASHYÀNA.

Àyt'ar is one in seven parts. This conception of God in parts is prominently expressed in *Àyt'ar*.

(h) *Làmilaà* (*Nàmiraà* or *Shàmiraà*).

Àyt'ar-nòwa ends with *Làmilaà*. What this word denotes is difficult to explain. It appears to denote the god of conjugal happiness of the youth.

On the same evening, after the conclusion of *Àyt'ar-nòwa*, the young people, boys and girls, meet at one of their houses, and begin to predict their fortunes. It is a time of laughter and gaiety, and the young people enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. *A-kwakwàr* of usual size is prepared in great quantities; and also enough of a smaller size, extremely salt in flavour, to enable each participant to have three. In one of these small *akwakwàr* is placed a hazel chip, called *dnasp'adzw*, "stake of happiness." Each person is given three

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

small salt *akwakwär*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Lèmilaĥ* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Lèmilaĥ* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwär* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyəbir* (in Geo. *riktap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abaia*.

[1] *Anasp'a dsw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dsadsola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'w*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-satskhela*. The word *a-baia*, in Abkhasian *a-mərtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik iedki*.

their enemies, the god ordered the bird *aqaqab* to watch over them; the Megrelians who have the same belief, call this bird *kakabi*.[1] As soon as this bird sights at a distance a hunter or some other enemy, it soars high up into the sky, and by screeching warns the game of the approach of danger. That is why this bird is always found near the beasts.

The god of the mountains demands respect. He punishes severely those bold enough to bathe in clear, transparent mountain streams. The Abkhaz shepherds do not, therefore, bathe in these streams, being afraid of drawing upon themselves the displeasure of the god of the mountains: the nude body is said to defile the waters of the mountain spirit.

3. *Azhwèyp'shaă* (gods of beasts and hunting)[2]

Azhwèyp'shaă are gods of beasts and of hunting. They dwell in impassable forests, and lead an ordinary family life. To them are subjected all game, and without their will no one can shoot bird or beast. These gods kill for themselves some wild animal, boil and eat its meat; they wrap the bones in its skin and then revive the animal by striking it with a wand. Only after an animal has been resurrected in this way is a hunter granted the right to shoot it, and then only the particular hunter for whom the gods have destined it: no one else, try as much as he will, can kill it. Of this the Abkhasians are aware, and they employ the following characteristic greeting when they encounter a fellow hunter: *xp'sə-aakhèw yùxp'shùr*, "Which is destined to die, that (animal) is waiting for thee!" the answer being, "For both of us is waiting!"

A few words may be said about the way in which Abkhasians divine the success or failure of their hunting on the day of the Assumption. Before starting out the hunter takes a sharp knife and repeatedly strikes the table, cutting nicks in it. Passing his palm over the table, he says: "Whether thou sayest fifteen, whether I say fifteen, whoever says fifteen (it will be) thirty, fifteen." If the nicks thus cut number exactly fifteen it is a good omen; the gods will reward him with game.

The Abkhasians learnt this method in the following manner. A hunter once followed a wild goat, but he could not shoot it. It led him into the thick of a wood, where he saw a huge cauldron, around which sat gods. They invited him to join them. Nearby stood a goat. They killed the latter and invited the hunter to partake of the meal. When the gods began to throw bones into the hide, the hunter concealed one of them, putting in its place a small stick (or a small knife,

[1] The word is consonant with the Georgian *Kakabi*, partridge.
[2] The term is construed as plural.

[766 cont.] Then one tries to console the dead (angip'sngis) with prayer and sacrifices of meat and sour milk, which are laid on a cloth under a protective roof near some clothing and, in the case of female souls, trinkets, and begs for the recovery of the stricken person, who stands nearby and whose back is stroked for "deliverance" (azati).

When someone has drowned and his body has been buried, his soul is supposed to have remained in the water and must be fetched out. For this purpose they hang a leather shoulder-sack on a silk string over the stream in question, and men and women stand on the back singing and playing the harp to entice the soul into the sack. As soon as the soul has slipped in, a man jumps into the water and ties the sack shut, he then takes it to the grave and allows the soul to enter into its body through a hole.

[767] Religious beliefs and customs. Christianity is supposed to have been brought to Abkhazia, according to the Georgian chronicle of Vakhtang V, about 40 A.D., but apparently did not find favorable soil, since there are no reports of successful propagation until the time of the Byzantine occupation of the coastal cities. Emperor Justinian had a large church erected at Bitshvinta (pitzunda) where the Abkhaz Catholics and the Georgian governor then had their residence. At the end of the seventeenth century most of the Abkhaz were induced by the Tatars to take up Islam, and only the Samurakhan remained faithful to Christianity, but the many ruins of churches and monasteries are regarded by them as holy places to which they make pilgrimages and on which they take oaths. Also several customs may have a Christian origin: use of wax tapers and incense, colored Easter-eggs, respect for the sign of the cross, fasting, eating of pork, and the like. The Cherkess, in whose lands few remains of churches are to be found, gave up Christianity for Islam later than the Abkhaz; the Kabardin were converted to it toward the middle of the eighteenth century, and the others, under Turkish influence, toward the end of the eighteenth century. Both religions, however, have exerted as little influence as among the mountain Georgians, for the old indigenous beliefs and customs have never been given up.

The gods of the Abkhaz are very similar to those of the Osset (see pp. 86 f.). A supreme god (Antsar mz) is ruler over

[767 cont.]

776 good and bad. The Hammerers (Ašatsatšap'atsa) decide the fate of the newborn and write it on their foreheads (lakhintsara). As nature gods they worship the protector of cattle (Aĭt'ar), of goats (Džabran), of wild game (Ažvepša), of the earth (Adabna), of the rainbow (Atsakwa), and the protectress of the water (Dzlan dzahwas'), of the wind (P'šarn'a), of seeds (Dž'adž'a and Anap'anga), of dogs (Ališkantra), of bees (Ananagund), and others. Just like the Osset, they have a protector of raiders (Eirig-ātsnykh) or Tšugurukhnykh) and one of smiths (Šyošu). The latter two, which are called upon very frequently, may be of a manistic type, derived from the belief in souls, as may be the protective spirit of the hearth (Aša'ara), the mother-goddess (Anana'a), and the "outer ones" (adnqa) (see p. 22). The Abkhaz attribute to the god of thunder (cf. p. 87) the same power and abilities as the Osset do to the holy Elias, but he is in part confused with the incomprehensible highest god (see p. 61) and is endowed with his abilities, and therefore also the shape of the local supreme god (Anyba-nykha-dudrüp'š), whose home is supposed to be the
224 mountain Dudrüpsh at Lykhny. ---Hunters sacrifice a male goat
[782] or a ram to the god of game (Ažvepša) before the hunt, which begins after the vintage [768] and lasts until about the new year, so that he will grant them the desired prey from his herds. He gives them, however, only those animals that he and his daughter have already eaten and that he has restored to life by wrapping
[825] their bones in the skin after his meal. White animals are the herdsmen of Ažvepša and therefore must not be slain.

Evil souls, similar to the western European vampires,
776 tear the eyes, heart, liver, etc. out of the body and suck the milk from the cows. They have different powers and accordingly ride on frogs, mice, cats, or on foxes and wolves. Their chief (Roskipi) lives on the mountain Tabakona, where every year they must account for Mary's Assumption and must exhibit the plundered body-parts. For this reason the Abkhaz put up
● [788] crosses during fasts, carry lights on their heads, and on the previous night stay up and shoot and sing. The evil souls can at the same time stay among men and on the mountain Tabakona, since

/35 cont./

774 upon the summit of the mountain Tabakona. They are divided
775 into groups according to their degree of power: the younger ones
754 usually travel upon mice, frogs, cats, etc., the older ones on foxes, wolves, etc. On Assumption Eve they are all obliged to gather upon the Tabakona for the annual report of their deeds to their sovereign, Roskipi, and to produce material proof of their industrious service -- a heart taken from a man or animal, a liver, eyes, nails, hair, etc. To avoid attack from witches,
[789] the Abkhaz take the following measures: during the fast of the
[785] Assumption they erect crosses and stick candles in their hair, and
[796] on the eve of the Assumption they shoot off rifles, sing, and spend the whole night in vigil. The Abkhaz believes that a witch can simultaneously be at home, among people, and on top of the mountain Tabakona. The Abkhaz explain such a splitting-up of a person by saying that it is not the witch herself that wanders about, but her accessory soul (aphschchda = superfluous soul).

2.

000 The True God -- Paganism -- The Principal and Secondary Gods of the Abkhaz -- Causes of Polytheism -- "Creators" and "Forgers" -- Fate or Predestination.

776 To assist the supreme being, endowed with all the qualities with which, according to our understanding, God is endowed, says Mr. A., Abkhaz mythology added a number of other deities, assigning to each his particular designation. These assisting deities, according to their understanding, were created by the Almighty before man and the universe came into being, and
776 people at prayer appeal through them to God himself. God
782 himself never descends to earth, but if he needs to punish someone or to grant someone his grace, he sends out one of his assistants. In the prayers which are said and sung at sacrifices and other

/38 cont./

782 unable to perform that act because of his sickness, he then
755 presents something as a pledge, saying, "If you (God) are
753 sending this (sickness) because of my guilt, then relieve me; I shall pray to you as is fitting and as the sorcerer will instruct me." But when he does not know which deity is angry and is causing his sickness, he says, "No matter what caused this illness, I shall do whatever the sorcerers may recommend." The pledge is specially set aside as a sacred object until his vow is fulfilled. The performers of prayers during such religious rituals are men or women, depending upon the sex of the deity in whose honor the ceremony is performed.

I shall proceed to a description of the ceremonies themselves.

1.

/39/

782
755 The Ceremony in Honor of Mother Earth

A sinless woman, taking six nuts and a few grains of millet, leads the sick one to an alder tree. Here she carries the three nuts and several grains of millet around the tree in the name of the earth; then she does the same thing around a nut-tree (walnut) in the name of Adabna, begging him to have pity on the sick person. She then makes
[532 a richly-dressed doll in the image of a man, buries it in
789] the earth for the "liberation" of the sick person, and says, "Play and amuse yourself with this instead of with the sick one." After this, a large millet-loaf is baked -- "the bread of Mother Earth" -- and two other long loaves of bread for Adabna. The same woman takes a piece from each of the four sides of the first loaf, both the loaves in honor of Adabna, a candle, and incense, and with the sick person goes to the crossing of three roads, where she places the pieces of the millet-loaf at one road, the two loaves of Adabna at the second, and at the third she lights the candles and places chevyaki (shoes) there, saying: "Mistress Earth, these are your shoes!" She then places the sick person on his knees

/39 cont./

782 among the articles so laid out, with a "chikila" (a kind of
755 veil) on his head, and begs, "Adgil-ankhu, Atula-ankhuse, grant him your favor! Give him firmess of head, heart, and body! Give him color, skin, and bone! Give him back the will to speak and to work! Give him strength! Deliver him from evil," etc. In the same way she also prays to Adabna. After this, she removes the chikila from the sick person with a nut-twig, raises him, strikes him on the back with a whip, and says, "Go, from this day I grant you freedom (azati)," and then both go home. At home a loaf of millet-bread is broken in two; two women each take a half and stand on the two sides of the hearth opposite each other; the sick person passes three times between them under the loaf, while one of the women exclaims, "Give me the one who has assumed the Hebrew belief," and the other, "Give me the convert to Christianity."

753 The Abkhaz is convinced that the invisible being that
755 settled in the sick man hastens immediately upon leaving him to enter someone else, and so, to help him find a new victim, they pray to him at the crossroads, where there is a continuous /40/ traffic of people, and, subsequently, a victim is always found it is unnecessary to search very long. And since an illness can be caught from a spot where a person accidentally fell or sat down, the rite of appeasing the
[823] earth must be performed on the very same spot of the falling or sitting from which the sickness originated; the doll must be buried on exactly the same spot. This is why, in order not to catch something evil from the spot where he sat down,
• [789] the Abkhaz spits three times on getting up and says, "Here stood the house and courtyard of my grandfather!"

2.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Water

782 When someone is ill for a long time with a fever, a
755 female fortune-teller is asked for advice and help; she usually
791

/41 cont./

515 782 823 [783] Fearing to defile it, the Abkhaz avoids bathing in running water; if he bathes, upon coming out /42/ of the water he takes three stones and says, "I sinned against you today; I went into the water and bathed, but you, forgive me." With this prayer, he passes the pebbles around his head with his hands and throws them into the water.

3.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Rainbow

753 [755] [782] The ceremony in honor of the rainbow, which is not obligatory for all, is performed for the greater part on persons whose sickness, according to the female fortune-teller, is caused by the rainbow. A prolonged yellowness of the face, a weakening of the organism, instability of character -- the [821] Abkhaz attributes all these to the fact that the sick person entered water at the very moment when the rainbow was drinking from it.

755 782 "Sinless" old women, having planned a sacrifice and promised a prayer, lead the sick person out to a brook; they take with them two fried capons, two stuffed loaves of unleavened bread in the shape of a tongue, and other provisions, as in the performance of the ceremony in honor of the water. On both sides of the brook, clean objects are laid out, such as clothes, silver, etc., a little bridge made of thread is thrown over the river from one bank to another. Having prepared all this, the praying-woman, with a doll that has been prepared beforehand in her hands, walks around the sick person, who is kneeling down covered with a piece of calico, and prays for him to the rainbow, known by the name Eliaphshi; then she takes a candle and addresses a similar prayer to the "Mistress Mother of the Water," and her "lord husband." After praying over the provisions she takes some [789] of each dish and throws it into the water; she places the doll in a pumpkin, and, after adorning the latter with lighted

/42 cont./

755 782 [789] candles, she lets it float down the stream, saying, "Amuse yourself with this one, instead of the sick person." Finally the old praying-woman passes her hand over the sick person's back, raises him, and having given him liberty ("azati") from his ailment, she sends him home, instructing him not to look around on his way back. The food brought to the stream is eaten on the spot by the participants in the ceremony; the remains from the table are thrown into the water and the dishes washed clean.

This prayer-ritual is considered the most sacred of all in Abkhazia, and the name of the rainbow, Atsaqva, is pronounced with great reverence. The Abkhaz claims that as [821] a consequence of this ceremony in the rainbow's honor the rain appears.

4.

/43/

782 The Prayer-Ceremony in Honor of the Wind (Phsharnha)

A large loaf of bread with cheese is prepared, placed in a basket, and carried some distance from the house. Here [776] a prayer is said to "Lady Wind" (a deity of female sex), in [827] which she is asked to bring good and to carry off evil and to [777] deliver them from all sorts of misfortunes, etc. Then the middle part of the loaf is cut out, carried into the forest, and hung on an oak tree near the top. The next day, the one who first comes near the oak tree feasts on this offering.

5.

A Prayer in Honor of a Tree

782 804 On Assumption Day, vitushki are baked according to the number of men in the family; then the master of the house, with his household, approaches any kind of young tree and, putting his foot on it, prays, "Tree, give me your blessing and happiness ... that I may safely come down

/48 cont./
753 "hung on the girls' ears." Rheumatic pains in the knees, instability of character, general weakness of the organism of a person, etc. -- all these are consequences of a
789 "weighty cause." To avert the sickness, a button is fastened to the ear like an earring. An innocent and sinless woman
755 leads the ailing person to a nut-bush and makes him kneel;
782 she drives seven /49/ sticks of nut-wood into the ground around him, fastens a lighted candle to each of them, and prays
[776] on behalf of the sick person to hanipha, the genius, walking along the rocks.

18.

Prayer in Honor of the Supreme Being

776
753 This supreme being is believed to be the cause of all kinds of sickness in man. When the body-temperature of a seriously sick person fluctuates greatly and he is alternately thrown into a fever and chills, when he faints or loses consciousness and regains it momentarily, and then begins to toss and become delirious, to sing songs, to mumble prayers, etc., the Abkhaz believe that all these severe pathological conditions are unmistakable signs of action by a superior force, by the supreme deities (Antsa r mzz) on the sick person -- "there is a divine cause." The Abkhaz are convinced that this "divine cause" has taken up its abode in the sick
755 person and therefore they say, Antsa drthoup, i.e., "a god
[787] came to visit." When the female fortune-teller confirms that the cause of the sickness is indeed that "a god took up his abode" in the sick person, then everyone in the house must assume a gay appearance and rejoice instead of grieving, for "where the god has taken up his abode, there can be nothing but rejoicing." Therefore the village youth gathers in the house of such a patient and all begin to sing and dance, and even the sick person is made to take part in the dances and singing, if he is strong enough to do so.

[782] The prayer-sacrifice is carried out near the house on the edge of a forest. The offering is a goat or a kid, a

/50 cont./

782 On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when
233 the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and
[796] when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder-
[562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

782 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is
731 offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the
789 herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre-
[533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva rysshva
[821] and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second,
782 to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one
731 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, re-
574 minding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

/57 cont./

[782] [796] [262] are made for each member of the family. The chickens must be fried and the kvakvari baked before cockcrow. Just after the first cockcrow the master of the house puts bowls on the table, into each of which he puts a chicken and four kvakvari; to each one he fastens a wax candle. A brazier with coals is placed near the table. All the members of the family kneel down around the table, each opposite his bowl, [789] and the eldest person in the family, after removing his cap and throwing incense in the brazier, asks God to preserve him and his family from stomach disorders. After the prayer, all rise, turn to the right, and bow to the east; then everyone eats his portion, and each does his best to finish the meal without fail before dawn.

[796] [262] On New Year's Eve, after supper, a prayer is again offered in each family to ask for all sorts of blessings. For this occasion a rectangular pie is prepared, stuffed with cheese; this is put on a board to which a wax candle is fastened. The whole family kneels around it, and the eldest in the clan throws incense on the coals and says the prayer; then the pie is eaten and the leftovers burned on the coals. This prayer is called Kalinda. On the first day of the New Year the prayer called Gunykhva (prayer of the heart) is [262] offered. For this, a small loaf of wheat-bread stuffed with an egg is prepared for each member of the family. The head of [789] the family raises a loaf to the breast of each member, praying to God to preserve them from heart ailments. After the prayer, each one eats his loaf.

24.

Drought

[731] [789] During a severe summer drought all the village girls gather in their best attire near the river. They divide themselves into three groups and make a raft of branches, cover this with straw, and make a doll, which they then dress up as a /58/ woman. When all these preparations are finished, a

/58 cont./

731 donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and
789 put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva
[539] dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins
[825] to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

25.

Saints

776 Independent of the general worship of all the deities dis-
778 cussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny,
[184] Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke
782 their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in
[796] fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.

[231] On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

[770 cont.]

231 (atlar-tšoup'), they lay the animal on a quickly erected, three-
[782] meter-high framework or in a tree. The owner sacrifices an ox and prays to be spared in the future; then they eat the meat of the sacrificial animal, bread, and cheese, drink wine, and feast
766 the entire day. The Abkhaz proceed in the same way for a person struck by lightning, but no one may weep lest the god become angry (see p. 87).

• 789 During drought one also turns to Ap'i to send rain; an
[787] ox is sacrificed, and at the feast songs of thanks and praise (antšva-ryšša) are sung in alternating chant. In order to evoke rain magic similar to that customarily practiced among the Balkan peoples is used (cf. also p. 64). The girls from the village stricken with drought place a female doll embodying the drought on a donkey and lead it to the river; here they put the doll on a raft made of twigs and straw, ignite it, and allow it to drift. They pull the donkey by force through the water, and if he brays, there will be rain.

755 Various gods are called upon in case of illness. Ague,
[753] delirium, and the like accompanying serious illness are attributed to the presence of the supreme god (Antsar mz) in the body of the sufferer. In order to cure him, they sing and dance about him
[784] and even force him to do the same; then they sacrifice bread and a goat or sheep in the vicinity of the house, during which no woman may be present; an old man with a candle circles the sick person and pleads with the god to forgive him and deliver him. He also prays afterwards to Michael-Gabriel.

In case of fever they look for help from the "Mother of
[776] the Waters"; she lives, according to them, in a clear lake or spring, is beautiful, has brown hair and laughing eyes, and likes to live for a while with a man, like the mermaids. An old woman touches the water with some object belonging to the feverish person and begs the goddess to release him if she has enthralled him. Then she ladles up a few drops of water on some alder-leaves and holds them over the fire in the house so that the fever may leave as quickly as the water on the leaves. Finally the old woman moves away quickly, with the wish that the fever, too,

[770 cont.]

755 might leave. As soon as the afflicted person is able, he himself goes to the water with a prayer-woman; there he kneels and
[782] offers up a hen to the mother of the waters, a rooster to her husband, and a candle to each of them and to her female servant (Abza 'avabzatšav = benefactress, intercessor). The woman prays and strokes the sick person on the back for "deliverance" (azati).

If someone suffers from jaundice or debility, [771] the "irreproachable" elders lead him to the river, lay his clothing, silver articles, etc. on both banks, and make a bridge of twisted yarn over the river; the prayer-woman then circles the sick person with a doll and prays to the rainbow in the name of the Eliap'ši, to the mother of the waters, and to her husband. She
[782] casts into the water pieces of the food that was brought along: roasted chickens, tongue-shaped flat cakes, etc., and she allows the doll to float downstream in a gourd with a burning candle, while she prays that the goddess amuse herself with it rather than with the sick person. Finally she gives the latter "deliverance," and he may not look back on the way home (cf. p. 924 f. [untranslated]).

231 When rinderpest struck, the Kemirkehe used to dig a
●789 tunnel in a steep river-bank and in the middle of this a pit in which they fastened a black cat with a silver belt. They covered the pit with boards and earth, ignited a fire on top by rubbing two sticks together, and drove the cattle through the river and the tunnel, to the accompaniment of the priests' litany. Afterwards the cat was freed.

842 The above-mentioned threefold prayer at the water is aimed at fertility when one "leads to the water" a young woman
844 for the first time, during which an egg is thrown in, and, in the case of a woman in childbed, food for the infant.

787 The Abkhaz read signs for future events, for a favorable
[821] or unfavorable outcome for undertakings, from the stars, from the form of the moon, from meeting certain animals or human beings, and also, in the manner of the Tatars, from the cracks in a sheep's shoulder-blade that has been cast into the fire (see Vol. II, p. 325).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Àmza, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, guard over our men! Grant them beauty and strength!" Simultaneously the men-folk crowd around him, for the moon is the god of men; the women-folk stand at a distance. "Increase our cattle and all our weal! Burn out the eyes of the spell-binders, and the tongues of the evil-speakers! *Wootsw*, *Wootsw*!" the supplicant continues his incantation and, calling to the cattle, spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà* or *a-k'wərpà*) now in the direction of the sea, now towards the mountains.

"The moon is a man, and the sun is a woman," say the Abkhasians.

I will now quote from my notes the following brief account of a very characteristic Abkhasian tale:

(1) "Seven very rich Abkhasian brothers had no sisters; whereat they were very aggrieved. Eventually, however, a sister was born, but from that moment the wealth of the brothers began to diminish; every night some invisible power drove away their cattle in herds. The youngest brother who was endowed with the gift of prescience (*ashàna*) said to the others: 'A demon has entered our house in the guise of our sister; if we do not kill him, our days and those of all in the whole district are numbered!' The brothers, however, would not listen to him. Thereupon he left his home, and travelled abroad, where he married a beautiful maiden-sun (*Àmra*). After several years, feeling home-sick, he set out to visit his brothers. Alas! what did he find? There was nobody left alive in the whole district except a mouse and his own sister-demon (the witch). She at once devoured his horse, and stepped aside to sharpen her teeth. On the advice of the mouse, the moon-brother, to save his life, took to his heels; he managed to inform his wife-sun of his misfortune, who hastened to deliver him. But the sister overtook her brother and began to devour him. By this time his wife Àmra had arrived. She pulled her husband, *Àmza*, towards her, but the demon pulled also; and so a deadlock ensued. *Antswà* decided the matter thus: he allowed the wife-sun to have her husband, the moon, for fifteen days, and the demon to have him for the remaining fifteen days of the month. And from that time began the phases of the moon. As soon as the moon becomes full it means that the demon has begun to devour Àmza, on which account the moon diminishes gradually; towards the end of Àmza's life his wife, full of love, comes to the rescue of her unfortunate husband, and as her caresses and care restore him to life the moon waxes again. When it is full the demon reappears and the story repeats itself!"

(2) "The Eclipse of the Moon. During the eclipse a monster, Atv (*Atwyə*), falls upon the moon to devour it. In order to save their

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

539 [789] benefactor, the moon, the Abkhasians fire at the monster and thereby drive him away." [1]

(3) The Moon and the Sun. A beautiful Abkhasian widow woman had a son and a daughter, who often absented themselves from home for the whole day; they would go off early in the morning and return only late in the evening. No amount of coaxing or tenderness on the part of the mother sufficed to keep the children at home or stop them from indulging in their daily adventure, so she decided to shadow them. She found they were seated under the shadow of an ancient oak, in a thick forest, enjoying themselves in an agreeable pastime with the moon and the sun. Before them were all sorts of eatables. The mother, flying into a passion, flung fresh dung at the moon and the sun. The sun-sister, being a more fastidious creature, washed herself, but the less particular moon-brother did not do so, and hence arose the dark patches on the moon; the brother, the moon, and the sister, the sun,[2] then soared up to the sky for ever, while the widow and her children returned home."

821 Here I will also note that the Abkhasians always welcome the new moon by looking at its reflection through a mirror, or over a silver piece.

[753] A certain mainly infantile disease, similar to convulsions, is called by the Abkhasians *àmzakra*, i.e. "to be caught by the moon".

(e) *Àmra-nə̀ħwa*, Prayer to the Sun.

796 [776] When he has finished the invocation addressed to Àmza (the moon), the supplicant takes the sun-shaped cake, and, with the women surrounding him, he says: "Thou, Àmra, *Àyt'ar intswakhwədù*, the great part of the great *Àyt'ar*, grant warmth, and caress the women of our family! Increase our cattle," etc., and then spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà*) in the usual manner, uttering *wootsw*.

According to D. I. Gulia, in the village of Dchilou they use the form *Amera* instead of *Àmra*.

(f) *Anàp'a-nàga*.

[776] After that the supplicant takes *alaħwàra* (a large mortar) and, addressing himself to the god *Anàp'a-nàga*, says: "Thou, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, send us the warmth of thine eyes and of

[1] Exactly what *Atə̀wyə* denotes is difficult to explain. In connection with the above quoted tale, the etymology of this word may, however, perhaps elucidate its significance. *Atə̀* denotes the barn- or screech-owl; *wy* may be the root from the word *a-owyə̀* (man); consequently *atə̀wyə* may denote "man-owl". And by *atə̀wyə* is, perhaps, understood the sister devouring the brother-moon.

[2] Their gender is often confused: sometimes the moon and the sun are sisters or brothers, sometimes the moon is brother and the sun sister.

[3] I think the Georgian word *mizezi*, cause, is derived from the Abkhasian *amzəz*, cause (from *àmza*, moon). (It is doubtful! Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

himself, by placing before the "icon" also the amount he was to pay to the opponent.

Muhammadans also take the propitiatory oath at Ilori, together with the Christians.[1]

There are many stories current about the power of the Ilori "icon" to work miracles. I learned one of them from the lips of Biram Tkhazou and Seyt Zhania.

"In ancient times the Ilori 'icon' determined all the disputes of human mortals in the following manner. High up in the centre of the church, hung the golden scales of Justice. Under these scales stood the suitors, praying zealously to the Ilori 'icon', who inclined the scale over the head of the righteous. Knowing this, Abkhasians would not venture to break the law or wrong one another; peace and happiness reigned upon the earth. But men are cunning; an impious Abkhaz decided to deceive the great Ilori 'icon'. He owed a neighbour of his a hundred *manat'i* (= rubles) which he would not pay. The creditor complained. They both went to Ilori. When they appeared before the 'icon', the debtor handed to his creditor his staff which contained the hundred *manat'i*. The scale inclined towards the creditor, thus acquitting him of the charge. He took back his staff and left the church. The Ilori 'icon' was 'offended' and because of this fraudulence on the part of one Abkhaz it punished the entire people: the 'icon' took the scales of Justice to heaven for ever."

In ancient times the Ilori "icon" provided oxen for itself on the eve of the wake festival. The Commission assured me that eye-witnesses of this miracle were still living in Abkhasia, but none knew their names. As this providing of the oxen is described by A. Lamberti in the manner in which the Abkhasians relate it to-day, I will quote the description from his work.[2]

"On November 20th[3] they celebrate St. George's Day. A superstition prevails among the people that this celebrated martyr, on this day, procures for himself an ox from the neighbourhood and brings it by night into the Ilori Church dedicated to him. This church is held in great esteem, not only by all the Megrels, but by the neighbouring peoples also. Therefore it is very rich in gold and silver[4]—the icons are all made of these metals and are adorned, too, with precious stones; and even the doors are mounted in thick sheets of silver. So revered is this church by all the people, that, although situated

[1] In Northern Abkhasia *Dadsvap'sh* is endowed with a similar power.

[2] A. Lamberti lived as a missionary for eighteen years in Megrelia (1635–1653), and, according to him (and also to other sources), the present-day southern Abkhasia (Abzhua) constituted then part of Megrelia, the northern boundary being the River Kodor.

[3] The 10th of our (old) style.—N. J.

[4] At the present time, too, it is the wealthiest and the most influential of all the churches of Abkhasia.—N. J.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

in a distant country place and near the sea-coast, thieves have never entered there, nor has any enemy ship raided it or despoiled it of its wealth. Indeed, so highly is this saint (the Ilori 'icon') honoured, that not only would the valuable contents of the church not be stolen, but, even if precious stones were scattered *outside* the church, in its vicinity, no one would touch them. (It is the same even to-day, N.J.) In addition to the local population, this saint is also feared by the Abkhazes,[1] and even by the Turks, deprived though they are of the light of Christian religion. They all worship, and fear, this sacred object (the 'icon', N.J.) . . .

"On November 20th, the Prince (of Megrelia, N.J.) goes to the Ilori Church accompanied by his court officials, nobles, and the people of Odishi (i.e. Megrelia), to participate in the feast of the 'ox'. Not only do the Odishians go there on that day, but also the Abkhazes and Svans, in great numbers. The church is enclosed in stone walls about the height of fifteen spans. At its entrance are large gates surmounted by a beautiful campanile containing many bells. On the eve of the feast, in the dusk of the evening, the Prince, accompanied by a large retinue of bishops, princes, and nobles, rides up to these gates, orders them to be locked, then seals the keyhole with his own seal and returns home. The following morning, before dawn, the Prince, accompanied by the same retinue, again rides up to the gates. When they have assured themselves that the seal has not been tampered with, the Prince removes the seal and opens the gates. Within the Church walls, the ox is found. At the sight of this miracle, the people, with great fervour, offer up their thanks to St. George, and the church bells ring out the glad tidings of the miracle all over the country-side. Everyone is firmly convinced that St. George himself provided the ox and led it with his own hands into the enclosure. Also, it is said, the saint leads the ox thrice from the mountains to the sea and back, and offers the ox, thus sanctified, to the people as a gift . . .

"A long time ago, so it is said, an unbeliever (the Abkhazes say that he was a Muslim from Trebizond, N.J.) came here from a country many hundreds of miles away from Odishi. After witnessing the miracle and how the people celebrated the occasion, this obstinate man not only disbelieved, but began to mock the Christians, telling them that they were light-minded and foolish enough to believe anything. In spite of his attitude, the people tried to persuade him to embrace the true Faith of Christ, and unanimously affirmed that all the miracles of St. George were really true. 'Very well, then,' said he, 'I will do this. At my home, two hundred miles away, I have an

[1] In Ilori the Megrelian language prevails to this day; many, however, know Abkhasian also.—N.J.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

ox of a certain colour. If the miracles you talk so much about are true, it should be an easy matter for St. George to bring my ox into this church to-night; then, certainly, I will gladly embrace your Faith.' The condition was accepted. On the following morning, early, on opening the gates, there was found within the enclosure an ox which the unbeliever recognized as his own. Thus he was convinced of his error, and embraced the Christian Faith."[1]

(c) *Indl-qwùba.*

The *T'avadi*-s Marshania, and all those Abkhasians who descended from the mountains (Dsabalaa, Dalaa, Pskhvu, etc.), offer sacrifices (a ram, without fail) in exactly the same manner to a sanctity, *Indl-qwùba*, instead of to the Ilori "icon". I could obtain no information of any kind about this "icon". Everybody I questioned gave the same answer: *Indl-qwùba* is equal in power to *Dədərəp'sh* and the Ilori "icon".

These offerings are performed early in the morning, and serve as breakfasts. Every Abkhaz slaughters some animal for the meal (the favourite one is a castrated goat), it is often prepared on the Saturday. They also pay the customary Paschal visits. After the midday sacrificial meal they all go to the public square, where they indulge in games, chiefly football. During Easter week they also organize horse racing, the most popular sport of the Abkhasians.

7. *The Second Day of Easter*

This is a commemoration day. A variety of dishes are prepared, all of which are placed on a table by an open window. The eldest of the family, holding a candle and a glass of wine in his hands, prays to the souls of deceased relatives that they grant his family peace and happiness. Then follows the pouring of wine on the meat and wheat dishes. The whole family stand behind the supplicant. After the prayer each member approaches, places a piece of frankincense on burning embers, and pours wine on the food. Here stands too a smoking pipe. All remain seated in silence, in order that the souls of the deceased ancestors may eat in peace.[2]

The Abkhasian, as has already been stated, have no Paschal greeting such as "Christ is risen". They welcome each other with a kiss, saying: "May God grant us that we meet again next year," to which the other replies: "And for a hundred years."

[1] Quoted from the Russian and Georgian translation of A. Lamberti's *Relationi della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia nella qualle si tratta dell'Origine, costumi e Costi naturali di quei Paesi.* Published in Naples, 1654.

[2] This rite will be described in detail in my work *The Cult of the Ancestors.*

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

8. *Thursday of Easter Week*

(*dsatchòkhur, mardyàni t'argyalàz*)

796 On the Thursday of Easter week the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice [796] to *dsatchòkhur, mardyàni t'argyalàz*. I do not know what the first word denotes. *Mardyàni* is the Megrelian *mardiani* (Geo. *madliani*) and denotes "beneficent", "blessed", "abundant"; while *t'argyalàz* is derived from the Georgian word *mt'avar-angelozi*, archangel; it is not clear, however, which of the archangels is meant. According to the explanation of the Commission, this "icon" punishes the offending family by causing the death, in particular, of children. "If there are children in the family, it does not touch the adults," commented the Commission. Sacrifice to this "icon" is always offered by an oak tree. On the Thursday, early in the morning, sacrificial cakes are baked, and the whole family repair to their oak, which is usually situated nearby within the enclosure. Everybody kneels, [789] facing eastward, and the head of the family makes a bloodless offering consisting of *akwakwàr* and cakes, and entreats the great Dsatchkhur, the beneficent T'argialaz, to forgive them their trespasses, voluntary or involuntary. *Àämen* say the whole family. The oak tree is decorated [824] with pieces of many coloured stuffs, some fastened with nails and [778] some with wax. This oak is sacred and to fell, damage, or defile it is strictly forbidden.

On the same day, in the evening, but this time at home, the family [788] make a blood offering to *T'argyalàz*. A fattened capon is immolated and cakes are again baked. Some families keep pitchers with "sacrificial wine" in his honour.

"In ancient times when people were not so depraved, T'argialaz procured for the day of offering a wild he-goat as his victim," Osman [789] Kamkia informed me, "just as the Ilori 'icon' procured an ox. Now he no longer does so, for we are not worthy of his favours!" concluded the old man, sighing. The peasants Kamkia are *me-khat-ur-n-i* (Geo.), i.e. "attendants of the 'icon'." They keep a little cottage (*p'atskha*) [778] where the "god" is supposed to dwell invisibly. A money-box is kept in the cottage, into which the faithful drop copper coins used exclusively for the purchase of sacrificial offerings.

An old Megrelian, whose name has unfortunately become effaced in my note-book, told me the following:—

778 "The all-powerful and miraculous icon, Dsatchkhur, was removed 789 by the Svans from the Salkhino church, and taken to Svanet'i, where it remained for a long time; in the end, however, moved by pity for the Megrelians, the icon returned of its own accord and alighted on an oak which stands on the picturesque hill of Salkhino. Near this

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwrsa-rə̀mshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwrsa-rə̀mshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nə̀hwa* (*anə̀hwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə̀*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateyna, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzhq

 796 171

Wednesday was the day of the prayer to the tree spirit, with both the Abkhasians and the K'art'vels (and Megrels),[1] which is partly confirmed by the Megrelian name of this day, i.e. *jumashkha*; the latter consists of *juma* and *shkha* (Geo. *dghe*). What does the first component word denote? May it not be derived from the Abkhasian word *ajəma*, she-goat? The Pshavs have preserved the more salient *jumaghis jvari*, wherein *jumaghi* = *ajəmagh* denoting "goat-seed, goat-male", he-goat. This term may have been obtained from the custom of the Abkhasians of dedicating, or offering, exclusively, a goat to the tree spirit. This supposition finds further confirmation in the legend of Dsatchkhur, which procured exclusively for its festivals the wild goat (male).

One may also note the concordance between the names of some days in the Megrelian language, and the fact that it is just on these days that the cult is observed of those gods to whom these days are dedicated. Thus on the Monday (*t'ut'ashkha*) the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the moon; on the Wednesday (*jumashkha*) they observe the cult of the tree, and on the Tuesday (*t'akhashkha*) the cult of the mother-earth.[2]

III. Nàn-ẖwa

The Abkhasians call the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin 796 (15th August) (*a*) *Nàn-ẖwa*.[3] They observe with great reverence both *Nàn-ẖwa* and the Lent of the Assumption. With *Nàn-ẖwa* are connected the following superstitions of the Abkhasians:—

(*a*) *Àwyəst'ad-lòkhəra* (Meg. *Dchindchat'oba*)

Abkhasians associate the night before the 1st August with 789 increased activity on the part of evil spirits *àwyəst'ad*, demons; and [796]

[1] N. Janashia evidently here uses *k'art'vel* as a generic term, including Megrels, but etymologically and linguistically such use of the term is definitely inadmissible. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The last two comparisons are made by the author, because for *jumashkha* he had also another etymology in connection with the Abkhasian *a-j*, oak, with which he identifies the Megrelian *ja*, tree; while in the first part (*t'akha-*) of the word *t'akhashkha*, he saw the Megrelian *dikha*, earth, soil. These doubtful etymologies have been eliminated. On the other hand, cf. *nertchi*, in I. Kipshidze's *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v., where this term is interpreted as "the basis of something, or the ground on which a house stands", and since the prayer dedicated to *nertchi*, or "master, lord" *nertchi*, as to a kind of deity, cannot be performed in a house with a wooden floor, I. Kipshidze concluded "that *nertchi* is god of the earth", in which supposition he was to a certain extent supported by definitions of the same word, given by lexicographers (S. S. Orbeliani: "the external side of the bottom"; Tchubinov (I): "bottom, the lower part of a vessel"; Tchub (II): "the lower part of the vessel, of the pitcher"). These materials N. Janashia supplements in his letter, dated 16th April, thus: "In Imeret'i *nertchi* denotes ceiling (see also V. Beridze, *Sitqvishona*, The Dictionary, s.v.), while in Megrelia, on the other hand, the rite is known under the name of *p'udzeshi do nertchish khvama*, 'the praying of the foundation and ceiling' if not 'of the floor'." (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[3] In my opinion *Nan(an)* denotes mother, and *ẖwa*, "says" (from *aẖwara*, see above, p. 124, note 2), that is, "for the mother," "the mother's day."

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

they, therefore, take precautionary measures to avoid becoming victims of the malignant will of the evil spirits. Nothing is left outside the house, or in the courtyard; nobody sleeps out of doors. To safeguard themselves from evil spirits, the superstitious attach pieces of wax to their hair. Crosses are made from *a-lakwə̀mha* (Geo. *lekumkha*),[1] to which are appended acanthus leaves, and these are placed at the courtyard gates, house doors, the gates of the kitchen gardens and cornfields, the poultry and cow-houses, etc. Acanthus leaves are hung around the necks of the domestic animals. The Abkhaz is convinced that *dwyəst'aă* dare not approach these crosses, which are also a protection against evil eyes.

During this night the evil spirits go out to look for booty, under the leadership of their mother, *Arapàp* (Meg. *rokapi*). On this expedition they are joined by human beings in whom evil spirits have taken their abode. Some of these evil spirits ride wolves or cats, and devour all the animals left outside by their owners who had no time, or had forgotten to drive them into shelter.[2] All evil spirits without exception stir abroad during this night; they wander growling from village to village and through the forests. For this reason it is easy to find out and catch them, and with this object youths go into the woods, where they make a large fire, using the wood of *a-lakwə̀mha*. The youngsters hide behind the bushes and watch out to see if they can recognize those of their neighbours into whom an evil spirit has entered. It is believed that the demons never pass a bonfire without stopping and warming themselves a little by it. Often quarrels arise on this ground, with unpleasant consequences. This custom of seeking after the evil spirits, "demons," is called *Awyəst'aă lə̀khəra*, which denotes "the catching of the demon"; it is also known under the Megrelian name of *dchindchat'oba*. To this day an Abkhaz believes that an evil spirit can enter into, and remain in, a human body, particularly in that of an old woman.

The chief *dwyəst'aă* is the eldest son of the sister of God, and that is why He, being a blood relation, cannot destroy him, although he may frighten him off with thunder. Here it will be appropriate to quote the following popular story:—

"At the time of the partition of the work between God and the devil, the former, exercising the right of seniority,[3] suggested to the devil that they should divide the world between them. The latter

[1] The Russian *krushina*, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, that is, *alaternus* (R. Eristov mentions the plant *lekukha*, but he does not explain it. Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*).

[2] To safeguard an animal from wild beasts when he strays in the forest, they "bind the mouth" of the wild animals as follows: a pair of scissors is tied and a suitable prayer is uttered. "A sure remedy."

[3] The younger divides, and the elder chooses.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

agreed. During the night God caused the earth to be covered with luxuriant vegetation. Captivated by the beauty of vegetation the devil suggested to God that the best way to divide the world between them would be for one to have the earth and the other the vegetation. God took as his share the earth, and the devil received the vegetation. God then ordered him to remove his vegetation immediately. Only now did the devil realize his mistake, which, however, he rectified thus: he restored the vegetation to God, and in return for it he begged and obtained from Him the right to the souls of those who fall from the trees, having climbed them without first praying to God for their safety. . . ."

(*b*) *Barbanjia* (*dchiakokona*)

Before sunset on the 14th August the Abkhasian youths light, in their respective courtyards, a fire of flax straw (at present, owing to the lack of this straw, they use dry fern, etc.). Each person leaps thrice through the flame of this fire, shouting " I have burnt the evil spirit; I have burnt the evil spirit ". By so leaping through the flame an Abkhaz " purifies " himself of the evil spirit. After they have leapt three times through the flame each throws a piece of salt into the burning fire, and then, altogether, they begin to beat the fire with sticks to extinguish it, at the same time shouting the above quoted words. At the conclusion of the whole operation, the neighbours inform each other of their victory over the evil spirit by firing a gun. This manner of destroying the evil spirits is called " the burning of the demon " or *Barbanjia*. The denotation of the word is incomprehensible to me.[1]

(*c*) *Nân-ĥwa*

On the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, the " pure " (eldest) woman in the family prepares *a-tcha* (" a round bread stuffed with cheese "), boils a cock, and leads the whole family into the kitchen garden. Here they all kneel in front of the blossoming cucumber vine, and the eldest woman makes offering to Nan, saying: " the great Nan (*Nân-du*)! We who offer thee this sacrifice, established by our ancestors, humbly entreat thee to have mercy upon our house: increase it like the stars in the sky! " etc. The kneeling family repeat with her, *Âmen*. But no one knows who *Nan* (*Anan*) is; they only know that she is a goddess of procreation of the human race. Of the Mother of God there is no knowledge whatever.

[1] The Georgian equivalent is *Dchiakokona*, which is observed on Ash-Wednesday. *Dchiakokona*, according to Tchubinov, denotes " the leaping through the fire on Wednesday of Passion-week ".

/39 cont./

782 among the articles so laid out, with a "chikila" (a kind of
755 veil) on his head, and begs, "Adgil-ankhu, Atula-ankhuse, grant him your favor! Give him firmess of head, heart, and body! Give him color, skin, and bone! Give him back the will to speak and to work! Give him strength! Deliver him from evil," etc. In the same way she also prays to Adabna. After this, she removes the chikila from the sick person with a nut-twig, raises him, strikes him on the back with a whip, and says, "Go, from this day I grant you freedom (azati)," and then both go home. At home a loaf of millet-bread is broken in two; two women each take a half and stand on the two sides of the hearth opposite each other; the sick person passes three times between them under the loaf, while one of the women exclaims, "Give me the one who has assumed the Hebrew belief," and the other, "Give me the convert to Christianity."

753 The Abkhaz is convinced that the invisible being that
755 settled in the sick man hastens immediately upon leaving him to enter someone else, and so, to help him find a new victim, they pray to him at the crossroads, where there is a continuous /40/ traffic of people, and, subsequently, a victim is always found it is unnecessary to search very long. And since an illness can be caught from a spot where a person accidentally fell or sat down, the rite of appeasing the
[823] earth must be performed on the very same spot of the falling or sitting from which the sickness originated; the doll must be buried on exactly the same spot. This is why, in order not to catch something evil from the spot where he sat down,
[789] the Abkhaz spits three times on getting up and says, "Here stood the house and courtyard of my grandfather!"

2.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Water

782 When someone is ill for a long time with a fever, a
755 female fortune-teller is asked for advice and help; she usually
791

/40 cont./

782 prescribes a prayer to the water, which is thought to be the
755 cause of the illness. Since the protectress of the waters,
[791] the "Mother of Water," is a woman, a sinless old woman is invited to the ceremony.

776 A large, clear, inaccessible fresh-water lake is thought
[778] to be the residence of the "Mother of Water"; she may also dwell in a pure spring, untouched by anything unclean, such as a pig, etc. The "Mother of Water" sometimes comes out of her dwelling to the shore, and at that time anyone may see her. This is how the Abkhaz describe this "Mother of Water." She is a most beautiful, bewitching woman; her locks are incomparable and chestnut in color; her eyes are laughing. The Abkhaz who has been bewitched by her talks
753 to his comrades thus: "Eh, brothers, I have been vanquished
776 by the 'Mother of the Water,' and from now on I no longer
539 belong to your society. Recently I rode into a dense forest and saw a table spread there under a big oak; a mirror and a lighted candle stood nearby; the 'Mother of the Water' was sitting in front of the mirror, smiling at her own beauty and combing her long hair, which reached the ground. My arms fell to my sides from exhaustion; I could not take my eyes from that wonderful vision. When she saw me, she quickly arranged her hair and came towards me. I felt giddy... Without a word she raised all ten fingers, asking me, 'Are you willing to be my husband for ten years or not?' I shook my head, but she would not stop, and with the proper number of fingers raised, she offered me in turn nine, eight, seven years, and so on /41/ of marriage. As I kept on refusing, she finally raised her last little finger and fixed her gaze upon me. I immediately gave my consent..." (1).

1. "Etnograf. pis'ma iz Abkhazii /Ethnographical letters from Abkhazia/," Konst. Machavariani, Droeba, 1884-1885.

755
782 The "pure" old woman who was invited to the ceremony,

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AàZVibzhq

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nəhwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nəhwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nəhwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nəhwa* (*anəhwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateyna, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

/12 cont./

682 426 If the blood-price was not paid within a certain period, then at the end of the year, in place of a debt of four spans, five were owed, in place of five, six, and six became seven, so that an already considerable debt increased still more and weighed like a heavy burden on the shoulders of the debtor. But the Abkhaz had one excellent custom -- that of coming to the aid of an insolvent debtor. All the latter had to do was to announce that he "owed for blood," and everybody contributed his mite to pay off the debt.

796 682 608 The following ceremony was considered the best way to a complete reconciliation of the parties involved in a blood-feud. A relative of the killer gave a banquet and, through intermediaries, invited the claimant of blood himself or his son. It was sufficient to persuade the claimant of blood to touch his lips to the breast of the wife or mother of the debtor, and, as a result of this action alone, everlasting and indissoluble peace would be restored between them. If, on the other hand, the blood-avenger would not be appeased and would not come to the feast, then those acting for the other side endeavored to abduct the son or some other close relative of the claimant or in some other way get such a person into their house. If they succeeded, then peace was restored whether the avenger liked it or not, for to kill the foster father was considered a violation and desecration of the "breast" and beneath the dignity of a brave man. Love of homeland is developed to the highest degree in the Abkhaz. Some peoples say, ubi bene, ibi patria, but the Abkhaz, on the other hand, prays: "There is no better place in the world than Abkhazia. God, save Abkhazia." In both grief and happiness alike, the Abkhaz repeats this prayer.

186

574 As is the case with all ancient peoples, hospitality is piously honored and maintained in Abkhazia. The Abkhaz is convinced that every guest is accompanied by seven "baraka" (blessing, /13/ bliss, abundance), one of which remains with the host, and God gives back to the guest this seventh baraka. Even the poorest Abkhaz does his utmost to treat his guest as well as possible; when an Abkhaz sees a traveler going along the village

/22 cont./

565 they are prepared to sacrifice their lives for him if necessary.
608
[579] When a ward dies, the grief and sorrow of the foster parents
[064] are unbounded; for his funeral they furnish a shroud and money;
[065] they also bring one or two bulls, sheep, etc. for the funeral repast for the deceased. When their ward marries, they give
[585] him all kinds of assistance through their personal labor. They also present him with fattened animals and bring presents to his bride as well.

608 Among the Abkhaz another type of wardship also exists,
565 namely, that of an adult man being invited to assume the role
796 of ward. The Abkhaz peasant invites such a man with the words, "I wish to take you into my house and honor you according to my means." On the appointed day, the person invited goes to the house of his future foster father and takes along a few additional people. During the supper the host and his relatives kneel down in front of their ward-to-be and give him a glass of wine; they then stand and one of them addresses to him the following speech: "From this day on we regard you as having been nursed in our family; we are of the same spirit as you and will begrudge you nothing; we hope that you, too, will begrudge us nothing; you will be held in higher esteem than the other wards." After this they present him with a few rubles and give something to his companions (khadzh /see foreign text/). While handing over the presents, they say, "Vadcha enup" (a present for you). This ceremony ends in the following way: on a carpet, spread on the floor, a chest is placed, on which the wife of the host of the house, i.e., the future foster mother, seats herself; the other women surround her. Then the ward-to-be enters through the open door, stands in front of the hostess seated on the chest, greets her, /23/ and thrice touches with his lips the nipple of her breast, or, as the Abkhaz say, "bites her nipples three times"; after each time he repeats, "from this day on you are my own mother." And indeed, from
608 this time on exactly the same mutual relations obtain between
565 them as in the first case where another's child is fully reared. It need hardly be said that, besides the princes and nobles, the

/35 cont./

upon the summit of the mountain Tabakona. They are divided into groups according to their degree of power: the younger ones usually travel upon mice, frogs, cats, etc., the older ones on foxes, wolves, etc. On Assumption Eve they are all obliged to gather upon the Tabakona for the annual report of their deeds to their sovereign, Roskipi, and to produce material proof of their industrious service -- a heart taken from a man or animal, a liver, eyes, nails, hair, etc. To avoid attack from witches, the Abkhaz take the following measures: during the fast of the Assumption they erect crosses and stick candles in their hair, and on the eve of the Assumption they shoot off rifles, sing, and spend the whole night in vigil. The Abkhaz believes that a witch can simultaneously be at home, among people, and on top of the mountain Tabakona. The Abkhaz explain such a splitting-up of a person by saying that it is not the witch herself that wanders about, but her accessory soul (aphschchda = superfluous soul).

2.

The True God -- Paganism -- The Principal and Secondary Gods of the Abkhaz -- Causes of Polytheism -- "Creators" and "Forgers" -- Fate or Predestination.

To assist the supreme being, endowed with all the qualities with which, according to our understanding, God is endowed, says Mr. A., Abkhaz mythology added a number of other deities, assigning to each his particular designation. These assisting deities, according to their understanding, were created by the Almighty before man and the universe came into being, and people at prayer appeal through them to God himself. God himself never descends to earth, but if he needs to punish someone or to grant someone his grace, he sends out one of his assistants. In the prayers which are said and sung at sacrifices and other

/44 cont./

7.

782
585
[776] The Prayer Ceremony in Honor of Azhahara

The Abkhaz call the protector or genius of the house and hearth by the name Azhahara in whose honor is performed the ceremony for a young married couple in the stage of their marriage before they have appeared together before their elders and the young woman is for the first time led into her husband's main house, or when the bride is invited into her father's house. One of the oldest members of the family sticks pieces of the heart and liver of a sacrificial animal on a spit and begs Azhahara to protect the young couple at home and out of doors.

8.

Alishkantra

782
231
[776] Alishkantra is the "mistress" of dogs. In the opinion of the Abkhaz, the owner of good dogs will also be fortunate in the multiplication of his cattle; good fortune in dogs is associated with good fortune in all domestic animals. Therefore before praying to other god-protectors of domestic and wild animals, the Abkhaz prays to Alishkantra to grant him luck with good dogs and the opportunity to raise and breed them.

9.

/45/ A Prayer in Honor of Zhabran

[776] Zhabran is the protector of animals. Every Abkhaz owning cattle performs the prayer-ceremony in his honor on "Cheese Saturday." For this they prepare suluguni (a big cheese) called "sacred cheese"; bread dough is placed on the hearth, in which a man puts a core of suluguni, whereupon he prays, "Prefer me to all those pronouncing your name;
[796]
[262]

/45 cont./

782 make my cattle multiply; make them increase to such an
231 extent that in the future I may pray to you and offer you a cheese as big as this loaf of bread and my courtyard will have no room for all my cattle. Preserve my cattle from all trouble and misfortunes both at home and outside; grant that my cattle will lose only old hair and dung; grant that my herd will be so large that an animal walking in the rear will be unable to overtake one running in the front; may the calves play like young bears and shine like young stallions. This I ask of you." Then the person praying puts three walnut branches in the bread dough and, striking against the ceiling, exclaims, "Voots! chiphsh!" (a call to summon cattle). The same ceremony is performed on the Thursday of "Cheese-
[796] week" in honor of the protector of goats; it is called Dzhabran.

10.

A Prayer in Honor of Aithar

[796] Aithar is the protector of domestic cattle and the
[796] farm economy. The prayers to him are held on a Saturday, except during Lent, because offerings to him must consist of milk products, and among the rich the offering is a milk-fed calf. The customary dish at this time is a thin gruel made with the milk of a cow that has recently calved. The shepherds stand around a kettle or pot filled with gruel; the oldest of them, holding a wax candle, pronounces a prayer: "Aithar, grant me superiority above all those who pronounce your name." He then begs Aithar to increase his herds and to protect them from beasts of prey. Upon concluding /46/ the prayer, the shepherd throws three spoonfuls of gruel into a brazier with coals standing nearby, and the participants eat the rest. If the inhabitants of the whole village or a part of it perform the ceremony in honor of Aithar, then a calf is sacrificed, which is slaughtered by the most respected old man, who first pronounces a prayer. After the meat of the calf has been cooked or roasted, the same old man

/46 cont./

782 231 pronounces a prayer the second time, cutting off pieces from different parts of the animal and offering them to Aithar by throwing them on the red-hot coals.

11.

Azhvephshaa (Abn-intsvakhu)

782 224 776 796 Azhvephshaa is the god of the forests and wild animals. Hunters sacrifice to him before setting out on a hunt, usually the middle or at the end of December. For the sacrifice, they jointly buy a ram or a goat. When it is roasted, the oldest huntsman prays to Azhvephshaa to send success for their undertaking; at the conclusion of the prayers, he throws small pieces of roasted meat and a piece of incense on the coals. Each of the remaining hunters repeats the prayer in turn, adding his own wishes and indicating the particular animal he would like to kill, while throwing pieces of incense on the coals.

12.

Dzhadzha and Anaphanga

782 24 776 796 Dzhadzha is the patroness of the crops. Prayers to her are offered twice a year: in March, at the beginning of spring, and in November, after the maize has been stored. Praying to Dzhadzha is not accompanied by any special solemnity; it is performed quietly by each individual family. Rich landowners sometimes invite their former dependents to the prayer, particularly those who have taken part in the sowing and reaping of their crops. On the day set aside for prayer, dishes made exclusively of grain and fruits grown by the master of the house are prepared. After the food has been placed on the table, the oldest member of the family /47/ addresses a prayer to Dzhadzha, thanking him for the good harvest or begging him to send everything in abundance. For the spring prayer to Dzhadzha, all the dishes prepared are lenten.

/47 cont./

782 and light, well-being and success in everything; grant
821 beauty, charm, and elegance to our maidens so that, like you, they may shine, glitter, and warm people." In the prayer to the moon, they express the wish that the children should become like it in brilliance.

/48/ 15.

Prayer to Khphath and Khvnash

782 This prayer is offered on the Saturday of the week of
[796] Thomas, with cheese, bread, wine, candles, etc. brought as offerings. The aim is to solicit health and prosperity for the family. On one of the following Saturdays a similar prayer is addressed to Khvnash. Khphath and Mdzhath are
[551] men's names in Abkhazia.

16.

"Ananaha"

782 Anan means "mother." The oldest woman of the
796 household places some money on a loaf of bread (Anan l phara = money of Anan) and goes into the kitchen-garden where she places three cucumber-leaves on the loaf of bread and the same number on her own head. She then fastens a lighted candle to a cucumber stalk and, holding incense in her hands, prays, "Mothers and creators, do not let me have grief from my sons: do not cast me into sorrow because of them, but let me see them prosper." A similar prayer is said to Ashatsanha, the god-creator or god-father. A cow and money are offered in sacrifice to him. During Lent, the village maidens also used to pray to the "Mother of the Waters" that she might grant them long and thick hair.

17.

Prayer for the Ear

753 The Abkhaz says, "ahsa r lmha i klou," which means

/49 cont./

[755] [782] ram or a lamb, together with loaves of bread, etc. All this is taken to the place selected, and the patient himself is led there. No women are present, for they are not [562] allowed to approach this sacred place. A venerable man, holding a candle, declares, "Great god, as is proper and as the fortune-teller has prescribed, the worshiper today stands before you; he has brought sacrificial animals and loaves of bread ... . Have mercy upon him, be merciful to him, if he has sinned before you, forgive him. I beg you to let him go from this day forward, to leave him and free him like a loosened knot." While saying these words, the venerable man moves the candle around the patient, lights it, and places it nearby. He then /50/ takes another candle [776] and prays to Michael-Gabriel. Upon the completion of this ceremony, the sick person returns home alone, while the others sit down to a meal.

One such ceremony, however, is not considered sufficient for the send-off of so eminent a guest as a god. The [796] Abkhaz is therefore obliged to repeat the ceremony annually. One day a week is set aside as a holiday in honor of that same supreme being; this day is considered such a sacred one that the house even remains unswept, etc.

19.

Aphi

[776] [821] Aphi (2) is the god and master of the thunder, lightning,

[113] 2. See Sborn. sveden. o kavk. gortsakh, No. V, Tiflis, 1871, pp. 15-16, article "Religioznyye verovaniye abkhaztsev /Religious beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A. -- where, by the way, this deity is called Afy.

[782] and all atmospheric phenomena in general. The most solemn prayers in Abkhazia are offered in honor of this god.

/50 cont./

782 On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when
733 the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and
[796] when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder-
[562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

782 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is
731 offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the
789 herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre-
[533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva rysshva
[821] and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second,
782 to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one
731 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, re-
574 minding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

/52 cont./

2. Ibid., p. 162.

175 764 of Syracuse (who lived about the middle of the fourth century B.C.) said /53/ that "it is not accepted among the Colchians either to bury or to burn the corpses of men. They put these corpses in fresh animal-hides and hang them on trees. They commit to the earth the corpses of women, however, ... They venerate heaven and earth above all" (1).

1. Ibid., p. 208.

20.

Shasha

326 796 Under the name of Shasha the Abkhaz understand the inventor of the craft of the smith. They say of him, "Shasha khe ah-dou," which means, "Shasha, the great lord of trades." Shasha or Shash was the first blacksmith. He picked up the red-hot iron, not with tongs, but with his hands, and he forged it, not on an anvil, but on his knees. He is the inventor not only of the craft of the smith, but the inventor-patron of 363 other crafts as well. The smithy with all its appurtenances is the image of Shasha (2).

2. Iveriia, 1888, No. 186.

[787 796] [919] Prayers are offered up to him on New Year's Eve, and the most complete of the ceremonies to him is held by the blacksmiths and the locksmiths.

787 326 On New Year's Eve the master of the house kills either a calf or a ram, and his wife kills a rooster for each member of the family and prepares a pie of wheat-flour and fresh cheese. The livers and hearts of all the slaughtered animals are roasted separately; for this, instead of a spit, a stick from a young nut-tree is used. When the food is ready

/56 cont./

579 all this is hung on trees near the place where Eyrig-aatsnykh
782 is believed to have his permanent abode.

22.

Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh

776 Anybs-nykha-dudryuphsh is worshiped as the mightiest
[778] of the gods. Mt. Dudryuphsh is regarded as his abode. Those who dare to climb this mountain are immediately punished with blindness; therefore prayers and sacrifices to this deity are offered at the foot of the mountain. As a deity, Anybs-nykha has no exclusive, professional field of authority, but he is worshiped as higher and mightier than all the other gods.
[782] The arrangement of prayers and sacrifices to him is the same as to Sha-sha, with the difference that when an oath is taken in his name, the formula is "May Anybs-nykha send me blindness and every ailment . . ., "etc.

778 Anybs-nykha's residence is under the exclusive super-
[923] vision of the large Abkhaz family Ankhaë-Chichba. The Chichba have enjoyed this right for several generations; it is a source of great profit to them, since permission to bring sacrifices to this deity must be bought from them with presents. Not far from the top of Mt. Dudryuphsh, the actual abode of Anybs-nykha, a stone lies under an oak; on this stone the image of the Holy Virgin has been carved. All those who
[782] take an oath must put a coin or something metal under this stone, and woe to him who is tempted to take anything away, even one little thing, from among the objects lying there!

23.

/57/ Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve

782
[796] On Christmas Eve in every family chickens are killed
[262] and four kvakvari (small loaves of bread stuffed with cheese)

/57 cont./

[787] are made for each member of the family. The chickens
[796] must be fried and the kvakvari baked before cockcrow. Just
[262] after the first cockcrow the master of the house puts bowls on the table, into each of which he puts a chicken and four kvakvari; to each one he fastens a wax candle. A brazier with coals is placed near the table. All the members of the family kneel down around the table, each opposite his bowl,
[789] and the eldest person in the family, after removing his cap and throwing incense in the brazier, asks God to preserve him and his family from stomach disorders. After the prayer, all rise, turn to the right, and bow to the east; then everyone eats his portion, and each does his best to finish the meal without fail before dawn.

[796] On New Year's Eve, after supper, a prayer is again
[262] offered in each family to ask for all sorts of blessings. For this occasion a rectangular pie is prepared, stuffed with cheese; this is put on a board to which a wax candle is fastened. The whole family kneels around it, and the eldest in the clan throws incense on the coals and says the prayer; then the pie is eaten and the leftovers burned on the coals. This prayer is called Kalinda. On the first day of the New Year the prayer called Günykhva (prayer of the heart) is
[262] offered. For this, a small loaf of wheat-bread stuffed with an egg is prepared for each member of the family. The head of
[789] the family raises a loaf to the breast of each member, praying to God to preserve them from heart ailments. After the prayer, each one eats his loaf.

24.

Drought

731
789 During a severe summer drought all the village girls gather in their best attire near the river. They divide themselves into three groups and make a raft of branches, cover this with straw, and make a doll, which they then dress up as a /58/ woman. When all these preparations are finished, a

/58 cont./

731 donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and
789 put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva
[539] dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins
[825] to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

25.

Saints

776 Independent of the general worship of all the deities dis-
778 cussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny,
[184] Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke
782 their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in
[796] fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.
[231] On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

C 796 C [782] [769 cont.] and lighted with lamps, is set up in the house of an elder of the kin group. An animal is sacrificed in honor of the god, and after the feast the cheese is distributed among the participants as a magical remedy. Other festivals are celebrated: for the new year and for Easter, in March, when one first fasts, then slaughters an offering in the sacred grove, and enjoys himself by shooting at eggs, etc.; at the beginning of the harvest, when roasted unripe wheat with sour milk, and later other kinds of grain and fruit, are eaten as festive dishes; in October when the plants wither, etc.

A 796 782 The Abkhaz show their reverence for the gods and spirits at given occasions or on certain holidays by the sacrificial offering of animals, milk, bread, and other things, and by prayers, which are often constructed with a wealth of words and are poetically exalted.

Thus, on New Year's Eve they kneel in prayer, sprinkling incense on a coal-pan, around a rectangular cheese-cake (suluguni)--this custom is called Kalinda, cf. the Kolinda of the Rumanians and others--and on New Year's Day the father of the house lays wheat bread with an egg baked in it on everyone's breast, and he directs the "heart-prayer" (gunykhwa) to God, that they may be protected from heart disease. On Christmas Day between the first crow of the cock and daybreak he begs that they be spared from stomach ailments; afterwards everyone eats a chicken and four small pieces of cheese-bread (kwakwarí). The celebration of Syosu is also held on New Year's Eve, especially by the smiths. Here the father of the house prays to him for health and protection against harm from their work tools, and he throws into the fire pieces of curd-cake and of the heart and liver from the sacrificial animals: a sheep or calf for the father of the house, a rooster for each member of the family [Familie].

A 233 [782] C [776] A [231] Before driving the animals into the mountains and after driving them from there, the herdsmen sacrifice a ram in honor of the god of lightning (Ap'i, khakhikal = he who lives above, called Sible by the Cherkess) and pray that he spare them and their herds. When an animal is killed by lightning, [770] the owner calls out all the villagers; while singing and dancing

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

already collected for the writing of a full-size monograph dealing with the religious beliefs and customs of the K'art's, Ibers, and Svans. However, after some reflection I decided that the time was not ripe for such a task as some necessary data were lacking and I therefore decided to publish only the notes. Here and there, however, I have not been able to restrain myself from touching upon certain considerations and inquiries belonging to the larger plane, and these have overflowed in the form of footnotes.

The founders of Christianity, realizing that it was not so easy after all to eradicate from the consciousness of the majority of the population religious beliefs and rites observed for thousands of years, endeavoured to transform them, by wrapping them up in their own clothing and so adapting them to the Christian feasts and saints; thus they established their own annual festivals. Wherever possible I have followed in my account the established order of church festivals.

I should further point out that all the material herein described was collected in one village only, namely, Adzvibzha, in southern Abkhasia (the province of Abzhua), which, according both to Georgian and foreign (for instance, of the missionary A. Lamberti) historical sources constituted until the second half of the seventeenth century, part of Megrelia. This accounts for the fact that the Megrelian influence is so strongly noticeable. I think it is quite possible that some of the beliefs herein described may be capable of a different interpretation in Northern Abkhasia.

I begin my notes with Àyt'ar. In the first place, however, it will be expedient to explain my views on the chief deity *antswd*,* God.

Antswd is a compound word, consisting of *an*, "mother," and *tswa* (*ratswd*)—"many," which together denote "many mothers" or simply "mothers"; the word is thus in the plural form.[1] "In a formal or grammatical sense," says Dcharaia, "it is not an error; only the word 'mother' forms in the plural *dntswa* and 'God'—*antswd*, i.e. the difference is in the accent. But in colloquial speech both words,

* The underlined *tsw* is a trigraph representing a sound uttered with one articulative effort or breath impulse, of which the digraph "*ts*" represents the front lingual affricate equivalent to German "*z*" (*Zeit*, time), and the labial semi-vowel "*w*", the labialization of the preceding "*ts*". "*Tsw*" thus represents a labialized variety of "*ts*". See N. Y. Marr, *The Abkhasian Analytical Alphabet* (in Russian), Leningrad, 1926, p. 31. [Translator's Note.]

[1] It would be premature at this stage to enter into the question of the identification of the conception "god", in Abkhasian, with "mother", and any attempt to give a morphological explanation of the form, which is incontestably the plural in *-tswa*, with the aid of the Abkhasian word *ratswa* would be superfluous (see N. Marr, *Definition of the Language of the Second Category of the Achaemenian Cuneiform Inscriptions* (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Petersburg, 1915, §62. See also his *On the Origin of the Name Anapa* (in Russian). It is the usual linguistic method of the Abkhasians to interpret everything, even suffixes, such as the plural termination *-tswa* in the above instance, by means of the Abkhasian speech, with the aid of the Abkhasian words that survive to this day. [Note by the Editor of the *Kristianskii Vostok*.]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhaz RI3
Adzwibzhq

which is *Khetsia*.[1] He has one sister from whom descends the demon family; that is why *antswà* has no right to destroy once for all the demons, his blood relations.

The Abkhasians appear to have made their gods after the image of man; one and the same god can be both good and evil in relation to a given person, according to the zeal with which he fulfils his duties towards him. The only means by which an angered god can be placated is by open-hearted confession and sacrificial offerings. And as the Abkhasians have a great number of gods their whole life is passed in continuous prayer and offering to gods.

I. ÀYT'AR-NÒḪWA*

1. *Jabràn*

The Abkhasians make preparations for Shrovetide with particular solemnity, for its approach coincides with the observance of a series of religious rites and offerings, known under the general name of *Àyt'ar-nòḫwa*. Àyt'ar is a great god of procreation and fertility, particularly with regard to the breeding of cattle. He is, as we shall see presently, the head of a whole pleiade of gods, who appear to be subordinate to him, and each of whom constitutes a part of him. *Nòḫwa*, which is derived from *a-nòḫwara*, to pray, denotes praying, prayer, whence *Àyt'ar-nòḫwa*, meaning prayer, offering, to Ayt'ar.

The first in order of offerings is that performed in honour of the god *jabràn*, i.e. god of the goats (and sheep) (see above, p. 120).

On the Sunday, the last day of Shrovetide, the eldest woman of the family leavens dough from the flour of *ashò* (Georgian *shvria*, oat)[2] and places it in a warm corner. The dough is often kneaded with a stick, called *adswò*,† made specially for this purpose from the hazel tree, on account of which the dough itself is called *adswərəsa*, a combination of *adswò*, a stick with a tapering end, and *ərsara*, to knead.

On the Shrove Thursday the eldest woman of the family—*ap'hwəs-tsh'ya* ("woman pure")—takes a portion of this leaven, kneads it with the stick, adds some water and flour, boils it, and then bakes maizebread—*amgyal*. This maizebread must be baked on a hearth.

* For the pronunciation of "ḫ" see p. 119, n. *. The combination "ḫw" represents a labialized variety of "ḫ". [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† The combination "*dsw*" which is to be pronounced with one breath impulse, represents a labialized variety of "*ds*". For this latter sound see p. 329 (*h'*). [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] N. Y. MARR, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians* (in Russian), in *Khristianskii Vostok*, "The Christian East," St. Pb., 1915, vol. iv, issue 1, p. 138.
(A translation of this work is given in this number, pp. 157–180, see p. 171. Ed. *Georgica*.)

[2] It should be noted that in all these sacrificial offerings oat flour and, on rare occasions, millet flour, is used. Without this flour or unless it is at least used as an ingredient the offering becomes inadmissible. The reason for this is probably because *ashò* (and *ghomi*, millet) alone constituted the staple food.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

When the woman places the dough on the hearth, she holds over it a pure *sulguni* (a round of cheese),[1] from the centre of which she cuts out a small round piece and places it in the middle of the maizebread; with the exception of this middle part, the maizebread is lenten. When placing the dough on the hearth, she scatters bits of it, first in the direction of the sea, and then towards the mountains; and, as if calling to the goats, she says, *reyt, reyt* (the goat call), and mutters the following prayer: "Thou, *jabràn*, the great part of the great god (*Àyt'ar intswakhwodù jabràn*)! Grant us the warmth of thine eyes and of thy heart. Be the guardian of our herds! Bear goodwill unto us so that no harm should befall our herds, except their old moulted wool and old dung!" Apart from this introduction, which is always used, each says an improvised prayer. After this is over, as if calling to the goats they again exclaim, *reyt, reyt*, turning alternatively towards the sea and the mountains.

When the maizebread is baked, and the goats have returned from the fields, the eldest man in the family prays to god *jabràn*, muttering approximately the formula quoted above. The whole family joins him in uttering *dämen*, and the candles are lighted.

It is to be noted that during the prayer the participants also invoke the "god" *mkyamgaria*,* and say: "May thy bounty never fall short on us." It seems to me that this deity is no other than the "Megrelianized" angels Michael and Gabriel (Geo. *Mik'el da Gabrieli*), with whom Christianity endeavoured, in vain, to replace Àyt'ar and his "parts" of gods; up to this day the pagan deities still take precedence, although they also pray to *mkyamgaria*.

The maizebread is first cut into four parts with two strokes of the knife, and only afterwards into small pieces; the neighbours are not forgotten either, a piece being sent to each. The maizebread is baked in rhododendron (*à-k'wazhwa*)† leaves.

2. *Zhwabràn* (god of cows)[2]

This rite is performed in the same manner as jabràn. The prayer begins thus: "Thou *zhwabràn*, the great part (of the great deity)

* The palatal or mid-lingual semi-vowel "*y*" in "*k'y*", "*gy*", as also in "*ky*", "*wy*", "*shy*", "*qy*", etc., met with in this article, lingualizes or iotizes the preceding consonant sound, the combinations "*k'y*", "*gy*", etc, representing lingualized or iotized varieties of "*k'*", "*g*" (pronounced hard, as in "go"), etc. For the pronunciation of simple radical sounds see p. 328. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

† See p. 131, note *.

[1] In Abkhasian *àshyashwa*, pure cheese; cf. Megrelian (I. Kipshidze, *The Megrelo-Russian Dictionary*, s.v. *ant'ari*) *tsh'obas*, which is also an Abkhasian expression, denoting "pure (*a-tsh'ya*), good (*à-bas*)".

[2] In Guria this observance is known under the name of *boslobs* (an abstract form of *bosli*, cowhouse) or *ilorobs*; the latter probably has some connection with St. George of Ikori. The Gurians often call a cow *ilora*. In Megrelia the god of cattle-breeding is known as *Zhini-Ant'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Àyt'ar!" etc. The dough is kneaded from the same leaven, only when calling to the cows they exclaim *wootsw*. Shrove Saturday is dedicated to *zhwabràn*. 796

3. *Anə̀kha-nə̀ħwa* (*Dopu-nə̀kha*)

Near Adzvibzha is a little village called Dopukət, where dwell the Dopua-s who are attendants (Geo. *me-khat-ur-i*) of the "icon"—*Dopu-nə̀kha*, revered by all the Adzvibzhaans and Dopukətans. This "icon" is known also as *shwəjə̀n-nə̀kha*, i.e. Sujuna icon, under which is meant, no doubt, St. George of Sujuna in Megrelia. This "icon" is called *zhwaràk'yə* by the wives of the Dpua-s, for the reason that the wives of Abkhasians have no right to call by name the eldest members of their husband's *gvari*, or his relations. D. I. Gulia thinks that the word *zhwarak'yə* is the same as the Georgian *zvaraki*, meaning sacrificial animal (the ancient Georgian *zuaraki* = *zowaraki*, Armenian *zowarak*).[1] In honour of this "icon" every Adzvibzhaan and Dopukətan family bakes, on the Shrove Sunday, a cake from millet flour (*sorghum*, in Geo. *ghomi*), which is offered as a gift to it. Prayers are said by the head of each family, and a handful of salt and a piece of wax candle are put aside for the "icon". The eldest of the Dopua goes round the houses and collects the salt and wax. 796 [602] 796

Mamsər Dopua told us: "At the present time our icon is in the village Sujuna."

4. *Àyt'ar-nə̀ħwa* (*khwazhwə̀-kərà*, in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərà*)

On the first Monday[2] of the Great Fast the ritual of supplication to Àyt'ar himself is observed. This supplication is otherwise called *khwazhwə̀-kərà* (in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərà*). *À-khwazhwə̀* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) is a special cake, sometimes coniform, and sometimes of round flattened shape. These cakes, which may be stuffed with cheese or not, but on this occasion are lenten, are invariably included in sacrificial offerings of the Abkhasians. They may be boiled, as on this occasion, or baked. *A-kərà* denotes "to hold". After it is called, in Abkhasian, the month of February, *khwazhwəkə̀n-mzà* (*a-mza*, month, moon). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) denotes also rhododendron, the leaves of which are indispensable in the making of sacrificial maize-cakes. [262] [782] [805] [824] [782]

[1] As a cult term this word is met with in the form زرخ in Sabaean (Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, ii, 24, 37, cf. p. 191, n. 179), see N. Marr, *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhasians and Alans*, etc. (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Pb., 1906, vol. xvi, p. 203. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The Megrelians call this Monday *t'ut'ashkha bednieri*, lucky, or happy Monday, lit. the moon-day. With the Abkhasians, too, *Ayt'ar's* day is Monday; they pray to the moon exclusively on Mondays. [821]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaħwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the [462] fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [284] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsàsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ħwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [352] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, [539] and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nɔ̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number 776 801 seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaħwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *hwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian [193] *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with [821] the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [171] included in both pleiades.

3:Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvlbzha

The Megrelians also know this septenary, *shk'vit'-ul-i*, in honour of which the majority of families let loose a cow with a pierced ear. Her milk is not used for food. The bullock is offered in sacrifice, while the heifer is reared. The well-known Pshav *Kviria* is, perhaps, related to Megrelian Àyt'ar. I have pointed out above that among the Megrelians the god of cattle-breeding is called *Zhini Ant'ar*. *Ant'ar* is the Abkhasian *Àyt'ar*, while *zhini*, in Megrelian, "high," "heavenly," is equivalent to Abkhasian *khikh*. The Abkhasians, however, appear to have split up *Zhini Ant'ar* into two gods, *Àyt'ar* and *Khikh*. They appeal for help to the latter in the spring, when the cattle are taken to the mountain pastures. They pray to him under the shadows of trees. On four pillarets are placed poles, which are covered with leaves of trees, particularly of the wild hazel tree, the oak, or yoke-elm. A cheese curd wrapped in chestnut tree bark is placed on this table (*ashwamkyàt'*)* which is covered with greenery; on it is also placed *àchamak'wa*, a kind of millet porridge, cooked with cheese. In front of it is also placed milk gruel. Women are not allowed to be present. The head of the family, standing with uncovered head in front of this green table, called *ashwamkyàt'*, prays that *Khikh*, the great part of the great deity Àyt'ar, may increase his cattle and send all good things. While praying he spills a little of the gruel towards the sea and towards the mountains, uttering *wootsw*. The prayer over, he takes the cheese curd and passes over it cross-wise a hazel "knife", which is really a stick cut into a tapering, knife-like shape, after which he actually cuts the cheese curd with a real knife.[1] This ceremony of prayer is followed by a dinner, the remains of which are not cleared away. Three of the supports or legs of *ashwamkyàt'* are cut off (each with one stroke), the fourth remains there untouched. It seems to me probable that the table itself received its name from this act of cutting. Megrelians also know this *ashwamkyàt'*, which they call *sumket* (*sumi keti*), "three sticks," derived, perhaps, from *sumkvat'*, in which case it would denote "three cuttings" (*kvat'* < *kvat'ua* = to cut, to fell), i.e. "cut with three strokes."[2]

The Georgian Mountaineers also have their *Anator-i*.

(c) *Alòshkintr* (*alòskintr*).

These cakes are also put aside. The prayer now takes three new

* The combination *shw* represents a labialized variety of "*sh*"; *cf.* "*zhw*", p. 120, note *. In *ashwamkyàt'* the "*sh*" is not only labialized, but also lingualized or lotised, which lingualization is not, however, represented in the transcription. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] By using the wooden knife, the Abkhasian probably pays tribute to that very ancient time when his ancestors used that kind of knife.

[2] If the first part *shwom* represents the Megrelian word "three", one should keep in mind not the "K'art'lianized" form *sumi*, but the original, Tubal-Kainian *shomi*; see Marr, *From the Journies to Semis* (in Russian), in *Christ. Vostok*, ii, pp. 17–18. (Editor, *Christ. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvihzha

796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alòshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[262] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[754] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[776] In the opinion of the commission, *Alòshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[231] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight."[1]

The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If
[821] someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri*, *vàri*, *khəzò*, *jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*wàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khəzò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

776 (*d*) *Àmza-nəhwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

* See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the
[104] production of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ʒ" (the ancient Arabic '*ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of
[171] Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Aralès* (cf. *Alòshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Araia*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

Àmza, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, guard over our men! Grant them beauty and strength!" Simultaneously the men-folk crowd around him, for the moon is the god of men; the women-folk stand at a distance. "Increase our cattle and all our weal! Burn out the eyes of the spell-binders, and the tongues of the evil-speakers! *Wootsw, Wootsw!*" the supplicant continues his incantation and, calling to the cattle, spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà* or *a-k'wərpà*) now in the direction of the sea, now towards the mountains.

"The moon is a man, and the sun is a woman," say the Abkhasians.

I will now quote from my notes the following brief account of a very characteristic Abkhasian tale:

(1) "Seven very rich Abkhasian brothers had no sisters; whereat they were very aggrieved. Eventually, however, a sister was born, but from that moment the wealth of the brothers began to diminish; every night some invisible power drove away their cattle in herds. The youngest brother who was endowed with the gift of prescience (*ashàna*) said to the others: 'A demon has entered our house in the guise of our sister; if we do not kill him, our days and those of all in the whole district are numbered!' The brothers, however, would not listen to him. Thereupon he left his home, and travelled abroad, where he married a beautiful maiden-sun (*Àmra*). After several years, feeling home-sick, he set out to visit his brothers. Alas! what did he find? There was nobody left alive in the whole district except a mouse and his own sister-demon (the witch). She at once devoured his horse, and stepped aside to sharpen her teeth. On the advice of the mouse, the moon-brother, to save his life, took to his heels; he managed to inform his wife-sun of his misfortune, who hastened to deliver him. But the sister overtook her brother and began to devour him. By this time his wife Àmra had arrived. She pulled her husband, *Àmza*, towards her, but the demon pulled also; and so a deadlock ensued. *Antswà* decided the matter thus: he allowed the wife-sun to have her husband, the moon, for fifteen days, and the demon to have him for the remaining fifteen days of the month. And from that time began the phases of the moon. As soon as the moon becomes full it means that the demon has begun to devour Àmza, on which account the moon diminishes gradually; towards the end of Àmza's life his wife, full of love, comes to the rescue of her unfortunate husband, and as her caresses and care restore him to life the moon waxes again. When it is full the demon reappears and the story repeats itself!"

(2) "The Eclipse of the Moon. During the eclipse a monster, Atv (*Àtwyə*), falls upon the moon to devour it. In order to save their

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibZha

539 [789] benefactor, the moon, the Abkhasians fire at the monster and thereby drive him away." [1]

(3) The Moon and the Sun. A beautiful Abkhasian widow woman had a son and a daughter, who often absented themselves from home for the whole day; they would go off early in the morning and return only late in the evening. No amount of coaxing or tenderness on the part of the mother sufficed to keep the children at home or stop them from indulging in their daily adventure, so she decided to shadow them. She found they were seated under the shadow of an ancient oak, in a thick forest, enjoying themselves in an agreeable pastime with the moon and the sun. Before them were all sorts of eatables. The mother, flying into a passion, flung fresh dung at the moon and the sun. The sun-sister, being a more fastidious creature, washed herself, but the less particular moon-brother did not do so, and hence arose the dark patches on the moon; the brother, the moon, and the sister, the sun,[2] then soared up to the sky for ever, while the widow and her children returned home."

821 Here I will also note that the Abkhasians always welcome the new moon by looking at its reflection through a mirror, or over a silver piece.

[753] A certain mainly infantile disease, similar to convulsions, is called by the Abkhasians *dmzakra*, i.e. " to be caught by the moon ".

(e) *Àmra-nə̀hwa*, Prayer to the Sun.

194 [716] When he has finished the invocation addressed to Àmza (the moon), the supplicant takes the sun-shaped cake, and, with the women surrounding him, he says: " Thou, Àmra, *Àyt'ar intswakhwdə̀*, the great part of the great *Àyt'ar*, grant warmth, and caress the women of our family! Increase our cattle," etc., and then spills *k'warpə* (*a-k'warpà*) in the usual manner, uttering *wootsw*.

According to D. I. Gulia, in the village of Dchilou they use the form *Amera* instead of *Àmra*.

(f) *Anàp'a-nàga*.

[716] After that the supplicant takes *alaxwdra* (a large mortar) and, addressing himself to the god *Anàp'a-nàga*, says: " Thou, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, send us the warmth of thine eyes and of

[92] [1] Exactly what *Atàwyə* denotes is difficult to explain. In connection with the above quoted tale, the etymology of this word may, however, perhaps elucidate its significance. *Atà* denotes the barn- or screech-owl; *wy* may be the root from the word *a-awyà* (man); consequently *atàwyə* may denote " man-owl ". And by *atàwyə* is, perhaps, understood the sister devouring the brother-moon.

[2] Their gender is often confused: sometimes the moon and the sun are sisters or brothers, sometimes the moon is brother and the sun sister.

[3] I think the Georgian word *mizezi*, cause, is derived from the Abkhasian *amaza*, cause (from *àmza*, moon). (It is doubtful! Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

thy heart! Grant us such a crop of maize that at its gathering we shall have to bend the stalks with a hook (Geo. *Kavi*), and cut them down with a bill!" *K'uarpa* (*a-k'wərpə́*) is then spilled, and the cattle is called by shouting *wootsw*. *Anàp'a-nàga* is the harvest god. In my opinion the etymology of these words is as follows: *Ap'arə́* denotes "to twist or twine" something (a rope, for example), as well as "to pass with difficulty through something", for instance, a maize or millet field, crowd, etc.; *nàgara*—to carry: *inap'bo indgə*—carriest thou by forcing thy way, by pushing asunder.

There is also an evil spirit of the harvest called *Jaja*, but we will speak of her (she is a goddess) separately, as she is not a member of this septenary.

(*g*) *Atchshə̀-shyashyə́na* (god of horses).

Finally, the supplicant takes the cake whose shape represents a horse (or three *ə-khwazhwə*), and entreats (the god) *Atchshə̀ shyashyə́na* —the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, to increase his horses (donkeys and asses). Again *wootsw* and *ak'warpə́*. The word *atchshə̀* denotes horse; *shwyashyə́na* or *shashana* is incomprehensible.

With this ceremonial *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa* ends.

Judging from what has already been said above, it is clear that *Àyt'ar* is the head of a whole pleiade of gods, each of whom constitute a special part of him; it is noteworthy that in every supplication addressed to any one of these gods, *Àyt'ar* is also invariably referred to as one whose part is the deity in question. The religio-philosophical mind of the Abkhasians has arranged the hierarchy of these gods in the following order:—

ÀYT'AR: JABRÀN, ZHWÀBRÀN, ALÀSHKINTR, ÀMZA, ÀMRA, ANÀP'A-NÀGA; AND ÀTCHSHÀ-SHYASHYÀNA.

Àyt'ar is one in seven parts. This conception of God in parts is prominently expressed in *Àyt'ar*.

(*h*) *Làmilah* (*Nəmirah* or *Shəmirah*).

Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa ends with *Làmilah*. What this word denotes is difficult to explain. It appears to denote the god of conjugal happiness of the youth.

On the same evening, after the conclusion of *Àyt'ar-nə̀hwa*, the young people, boys and girls, meet at one of their houses, and begin to predict their fortunes. It is a time of laughter and gaiety, and the young people enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. *A-kwakwàr* of usual size is prepared in great quantities; and also enough of a smaller size, extremely salt in flavour, to enable each participant to have three. In one of these small *akwakwàr* is placed a hazel chip, called *ànasp'adzw*, "stake of happiness." Each person is given three

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

small salt *akwakwàr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Làmilaà* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Làmilaà* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwàr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. ÀMSHAP'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyəbir* (in Geo. *riktap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abaia*.

[1] *Anasp'a dzw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Pshav *dzedsola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-satekhela*. The word *a-baia*, in Abkhasian *a-mərtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik ledbi*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AlzVibzha

1. *Adzɔ̀rga-khwasha*

Either during the night before *baioba*, or, according to some members of the Commission, on the Wednesday evening of Passion-week, is observed the rite of binding legs with wool threads. Having supped early, the family retires to bed, each individual thrusting out his or her right leg from under the blanket. The eldest woman in the family stands on a stool in the middle of the room, and spins thread from wool. She does her work in silence. Having spun the required quantity, she quietly approaches the beds, and binds with this thread the right leg of each of their occupants, murmuring: "May God grant thee to see such days for a hundred years!" *Adzɔ̀rga* (more correctly, *adzɔga*) denotes a thick thread; *a-khwasha*—Friday, so that this rite was in former days, probably, observed on Fridays. The threads were afterwards burnt on the fire under the small cauldron in which was boiled the meat of the sacrificial animal, on Easter Day. 796 [782]

2. *K'wab-gharghar**

As soon as the binding ceremony was finished, the woman seized a copper cauldron, or a copper basin, and struck it like a gong, shouting at the top of her voice: "We have beaten! We have beaten!" The whole family then ran out into the garden, shouting *shwaħk'wat'weyt*! "We have beaten you (outstripped)!" The "beaten" neighbours, annoyed to find themselves "beaten", immediately fell upon them, and a mock battle ensued. The battle was fought, of course, entirely as a joke, and with great merriment. In ancient times, a whole village often went to "battle" against another, beating copper cauldrons and basins. The "battle" was followed by dances and fun-making continuing till the dawn. *A-k'wab* denotes cauldron of copper, *gharghar*, knock, rap, clatter of a copper cauldron or basin. [415] [535]

3. *Aqat'wara*

This Abkhasian term denotes the following superstition: an Abkhaz considers it a great misfortune if he hears the warbling or chirping of a swallow or the call of a cuckoo, before he has had his breakfast (or has at any rate partaken of salt); the bird will have "beaten" him, and this he regards as a great misfortune. In order to avoid this he eats salt, or something salt-flavoured immediately on rising from bed, which means that he has won the "contest".[1] [825]

* The labial semi-vowel "w" in "k'w", "t'w", as also in "kw", "tw", etc., met with in this article, labializes the preceding consonant sound, the combination "k'w", "tw", etc., representing labialized varieties of "k'", "t", etc. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.] 104

[1] Georgians also have such a superstition. 171

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *The Gathering of Medicinal Herbs*

796 [278] [784] On Maundy Thursday, young maidens, led by old women, go into a forest early before the dawn, to gather medicinal herbs. They must neither converse nor look back. When they dig out the herb, they throw salt into the soil, murmuring "*Àdgilə-dedop'al, bəkhwə̀ bàħt'eyt*, the Queen-Earth, we have returned to thee thy share". 757 The following herbs are considered as particularly healing: (*a*) *ajmshyə̀-rshwə̀ga, Arum albispatum*,[1] literally denoting: *ajmshyə̀*, eyebrow; *ashwə̀ga*, "that with which they paint (a paint)"; it is used against diphtheria and scarlet fever; (*b*) *aztqyil* or *abgar ləmħa, Aristolochia pontica*[1] (birthwort); the second Abkhasian term denotes, literally, "jackal's ear," used against erysipelas (St. Anthony's fire); and (*c*) *ajaqwa*, veratrum, according to Tchubinov (Geo. *Kharis-dzira*). 796 Having finished gathering, they return home in silence and without looking back.

Maundy Thursday is called by the Abkhasians *tchatchkhadə̀l*, derived, in all probability, from the Megrelian *tsashkha didi*, "the great Thursday."

5. *Jaja*[2]

796 782 [776] [241] On Maundy Thursday the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the goddess of fruitfulness (of husbandry and horticulture) called *Jaja*. For this occasion the Abkhasian women prepare all sorts of lenten dishes, taking care always to include a pumpkin. The dishes are placed outside the house, in a corn-field, the offering to *Jaja* being accompanied by a supplication as follows: "The great *Jaja*! We have done all that was required of us, and have made the customary offering. We therefore humbly entreat thee to show thy bounty towards us and grant us a good harvest in the field and in the kitchen garden!" As I have stated before, the Abkhasians have no set prayer formulas, and each prays as best he can.

As always, the offering is left for a few minutes wherever it was placed, and the supplicants stand before it, and watch with emotion how the spirit of the goddess invisibly satiates herself with the gifts of men! Needless to say they themselves consume the "remains".

776 241 As I have already remarked, there are two Abkhasian gods of fruitfulness: the god *Anàp'a-nàga* and the goddess *Jaja*.[3] *Jàja*, as imagined by an Abkhaz, is a broad-shouldered woman, of small stature. More than once Abkhasians have seen her wandering about the fields

[1] According to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden.

[2] It is of interest to elucidate what relation *Jaja* holds to Georgian *jojoeba*; see I. Javakhishvili, *A History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian), p. 136.

[3] The relation of these two gods is difficult to determine; nor do we know the relation of *Jaja* to *Ayt'ar*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

belonging to those who have failed to propitiate her, and muttering: 776
"Corncobs (of Indian corn) of a digit size, corncobs of a digit size!" 241
But if the owner of the field succeeds in frightening her and making her say *ràki, dzakì, ràki dzakì*, "of a cubit size," he will have a magnificent harvest.

On the day of *tchatchkhadə̀l*, after the offering has been made to *Jaja*, the seeds are taken for the first time into the kitchen garden.

6. *Àmshap'*

Easter Day is celebrated with great solemnity by all the 796
Abkhasians. It must be noted that the Abkhasians to-day have no notion whatever of the Christian conception of this day. Even the greeting, "Christ is risen," usual on this day, is wanting in the Abkhasian language. Everyone able to afford it has a new dress made for this day. To emphasize the poverty of a person the Abkhaz says, "Even for *Àmshap'* he could not get himself new clothes." This is almost the only day when an Abkhaz considers it necessary to send to church at least one of the members of his family. And the service in the church begins early enough to enable it to be finished by sun- [782]
rise. Everyone is in haste to be the first to light a wax candle and to [769]
place a painted egg on the graves of their dead. The Muhammadan Abkhasians also follow this custom, although they do not light the candles. It is known that Abkhasians bury their dead near their [764]
homes, in the places favoured by the deceased, and the graves, therefore, are scattered about the village. Owing to this custom the whole village is illuminated on this day of *Àmshap'*.

On this day each family must slaughter some animal. And those [782]
of the Abkhasians who follow the established custom of Paschal offerings, immolate two or three animals according to what his obligation is, what he "owes"—this word denotes "obliged", "must", "owes".

(*a*) *Antswakhwə̀* (or *Antswakwa*).

This is a compound word, consisting of *Antswà*, God, and (*a*)-*khwə̀*, part, share, and denoting "share of God", "for God", more exactly "to render to God that which is due to Him", briefly "praying to God". On this day most of the Abkhasians reverently offer up their prayers to God; but not all of them. There are families who are "not obliged" to render to God "His share". I have already mentioned 776
that the Abkhasian makes offerings only to those gods under whose power his parents or he himself had come, and thus had become his tributary, so to speak. Very often separate members of a family have, in addition to the general family guardian-gods, their own personal

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

guardians, whose power extends to his descendants, but not to those of his brothers or sisters. In the village of Adzvibzha almost everyone is obliged to carry out this " praying to God ", Christians as well as Muhammadans.

Every Abkhaz keeps in his cellar, in honour of " God ", a special pitcher filled with must of the very best grade. However great his need, an Abkhaz will not, for any consideration in the world, open this " sacrificial " pitcher until the celebration of the cult of " praying to God ".[1] Early in the morning, on returning from the church, the head of the family surrounded by the male members of his household, sacrifices a young he-goat over the " sacrificial " pitcher, and entreats " the great God to receive graciously the humble offering made by him in accordance with the instructions of his forefathers . . ." He humbly entreats the Great God " punish us not for our faults and trespasses ", etc. After this the meat of the immolated goat is boiled, and sacrificial wheat-cakes are baked. All this is taken down into the cellar, and placed in front of the sacrificial pitcher. The members of the family kneel down, while the head of the family reverently cleans and opens the pitcher, and, holding in his left hand a hazel stick upon which the heart and liver of the goat are transfixed, he prays *Antsa-du* (to great God) that He grant him and his family a long and happy life. In his prayer he never fails to mention that they are performing the rite " in the manner they were taught by their fathers and grandfathers ". Afterwards he fills a glass with wine from the pitcher and pours it on the heart and liver and the sacrificial cakes; he then passes the latter, with the wine, three times over the heads of the supplicants who are kneeling down, and says: " Grant us the warmth of Thine eyes and of Thine heart! Protect us from all infirmities and sickness." Then follows again the libation of wine Now they all rise, turn round from right to left, and each places a piece of frankincense on burning coals. For a few minutes they all stand still humbly, while the great God " receives " their offerings, and then, with strict observation of order of seniority, a glass of wine and a small piece of the heart and liver is given to each of the participants. It should be noted that only the household members are allowed to partake of these sacrificial offerings. Even the married daughters of the family are treated as strangers, and they are not allowed to share in the offerings with their husbands and children. It is sinful even to think of the sale of the wine. In most of the families the female sex is generally forbidden to partake of this offering.

Thus do the Abkhasians perform annually the domestic offering to God of " His share ". But every three to five years each Abkhas

[1] The same applies to other " sacrificial pitchers " referred to below.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 · RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

is obliged to present "His share" (offering) to God, in a forest, for which purpose a clearing is chosen under the shadow of a tree, oak or yoke-elm. Here is offered usually a castrated goat the age of which is equal to the number of years since the Abkhaz last prayed in the forest. Women are not allowed to take part in this rite, although they help to prepare the sacrificial cakes. The prayer is said by the elder of the *grari*, who receives the hide of the immolated animal. The offering takes place in front of *ashwamkydt'* (described above). The prayer ceremonial is the same as in the case of the domestic offering, although the pitcher of wine kept in the cellar is not used; for the purpose of the oblation a little wine is brought in a smaller pitcher. All the men in the neighbourhood participate in the ceremony, and when it is over they seat themselves on the grass; herbage is placed in front of them, and on this is served the dinner. A small piece of the heart and liver of the immolated animal is given to each of the participants. All the sacrificial food must be consumed on the spot; nothing may be taken home. The horns of the victim are hung high above the *ashwamkydt'* and left there. Three legs of *ashwamkydt'* are then cut, and the assembly disperses.

Some families dedicate to *Antswahwə* cows which are let loose with perforated ears (see above, p. 125); these cows are called *adzatwə*, which is difficult to translate; it apparently denotes "pledge", "security". Bullocks born of these cows are offered in sacrifice in place of castrated goats.

(b) *Aylər-nəkha*.

On the same day, simultaneously with *Antswakhwə*, a sacrifice is offered to *Aylr-nəkha* (*Ilər-nəkha*). The ceremony of offering the sacrifice is exactly similar to that described above. There is the same "wine pitcher", goat, cakes, and the same manner of praying. Also, at certain intervals, the sacrifice is made in the woods, in the manner described above. Many keep *adzatw* cows in honour of the Ilori icon. The only difference being that women have a freer access to these offerings than to *Antswakhwə*. Here I will note that if the pitcher for the "sacrificial wine" becomes in any way damaged (even if only slightly chipped), a new one, larger and dearer, must be substituted without fail. This is a general rule for all pitchers of this kind.

Aylər-nəkha (*Ilər-nəkha*) denotes the "icon of Ilori". This appears to be the same icon of St. George, which is kept in the small, walled-in church of the village of Ilori. This village is situated on the seashore, three miles from Otchemtchire. What is this Ilori icon? Which saint does it represent? For what is this saint remarkable? The contemporary Abkhaz has no notion whatever. The masses do not know to this day that it is the image of St. George. All they know

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

ox of a certain colour. If the miracles you talk so much about are true, it should be an easy matter for St. George to bring my ox into this church to-night; then, certainly, I will gladly embrace your Faith.' The condition was accepted. On the following morning, early, on opening the gates, there was found within the enclosure an ox which the unbeliever recognized as his own. Thus he was convinced of his error, and embraced the Christian Faith."[1]

(c) *Indl-qwùba.*

The *T'avadi*-s Marshania, and all those Abkhasians who descended from the mountains (Dsabalaa, Dalaa, Pskhvu, etc.), offer sacrifices (a ram, without fail) in exactly the same manner to a sanctity, *Indl-qwùba*, instead of to the Ilori "icon". I could obtain no information of any kind about this "icon". Everybody I questioned gave the same answer: *Indl-qwùba* is equal in power to *Dadèrop'sh* and the Ilori "icon".

These offerings are performed early in the morning, and serve as breakfasts. Every Abkhaz slaughters some animal for the meal (the favourite one is a castrated goat), it is often prepared on the Saturday. They also pay the customary Paschal visits. After the midday sacrificial meal they all go to the public square, where they indulge in games, chiefly football. During Easter week they also organize horse racing, the most popular sport of the Abkhasians.

7. *The Second Day of Easter*

This is a commemoration day. A variety of dishes are prepared, all of which are placed on a table by an open window. The eldest of the family, holding a candle and a glass of wine in his hands, prays to the souls of deceased relatives that they grant his family peace and happiness. Then follows the pouring of wine on the meat and wheat dishes. The whole family stand behind the supplicant. After the prayer each member approaches, places a piece of frankincense on burning embers, and pours wine on the food. Here stands too a smoking pipe. All remain seated in silence, in order that the souls of the deceased ancestors may eat in peace.[2]

The Abkhasian, as has already been stated, have no Paschal greeting such as "Christ is risen". They welcome each other with a kiss, saying: "May God grant us that we meet again next year," to which the other replies: "And for a hundred years."

[1] Quoted from the Russian and Georgian translation of A. Lamberti's *Relatione della Colchide hoggi detta Mengrelia nella quale si tratta dell'Origine, costumi e Costumi naturali di quei Paesi.* Published in Naples, 1654.

[2] This rite will be described in detail in my work *The Cult of the Ancestors.*

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

8. *Thursday of Easter Week*

(*dsatchòkhur, mardyàni t'argyalàz*)

796 On the Thursday of Easter week the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice [796] to *dsatchòkhur, mardyàni t'argyalàz*. I do not know what the first word denotes. *Mardyàni* is the Megrelian *mardiani* (Geo. *madliani*) and denotes "beneficent", "blessed", "abundant"; while *t'argyalàz* is derived from the Georgian word *mt'avar-angelozi*, archangel; it is not clear, however, which of the archangels is meant. According to the explanation of the Commission, this "icon" punishes the offending family by causing the death, in particular, of children. "If there are children in the family, it does not touch the adults," commented the Commission. Sacrifice to this "icon" is always offered by an oak tree. On the Thursday, early in the morning, sacrificial cakes are baked, and the whole family repair to their oak, which is usually situated nearby within the enclosure. Everybody kneels, [789] facing eastward, and the head of the family makes a bloodless offering consisting of *akwakwàr* and cakes, and entreats the great Dsatchkhur, the beneficent T'argialaz, to forgive them their trespasses, voluntary or involuntary. *Àämen* say the whole family. The oak tree is decorated [824] with pieces of many coloured stuffs, some fastened with nails and [778] some with wax. This oak is sacred and to fell, damage, or defile it is strictly forbidden.

On the same day, in the evening, but this time at home, the family [788] make a blood offering to *T'argyalàz*. A fattened capon is immolated and cakes are again baked. Some families keep pitchers with "sacrificial wine" in his honour.

"In ancient times when people were not so depraved, T'argialaz [787] procured for the day of offering a wild he-goat as his victim," Osman Kamkia informed me, "just as the Ilori 'icon' procured an ox. Now he no longer does so, for we are not worthy of his favours!" concluded the old man, sighing. The peasants Kamkia are *me-khat-ur-n-i* (Geo.), i.e. "attendants of the 'icon'." They keep a little cottage (*p'atskha*) [778] where the "god" is supposed to dwell invisibly. A money-box is kept in the cottage, into which the faithful drop copper coins used exclusively for the purchase of sacrificial offerings.

An old Megrelian, whose name has unfortunately become effaced in my note-book, told me the following:—

778 "The all-powerful and miraculous icon, Dsatchkhur, was removed 789 by the Svans from the Salkhino church, and taken to Svanet'i, where it remained for a long time; in the end, however, moved by pity for the Megrelians, the icon returned of its own accord and alighted on an oak which stands on the picturesque hill of Salkhino. Near this

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwsa-rèmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwsa-rèmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nɔ̀hwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nɔ̀hwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nɔ̀hwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nɔ̀hwa* (*anɔ̀hwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwɔ̀*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateyna, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Notes and Considerations concerning Chapter II

1796 It is of great interest to determine which pagan cult approximates, under the name of *Àmshap'*, to Easter, the day of the Resurrection of Christ. I. Javakhishvili states in his well-known *History of the Georgian Nation* (in Georgian) that, according to Dubrovin, the Abkhasians called *Àmshap'* also *Mizithhu*. In my opinion this is another form of the Abkhasian word *mɜzəkhwə̀*, i.e. " part of the moon," derived from *ámɜza*, moon, and *a-khwə̀*, dole, part, share. If this supposition is correct, *mɜzəkhwə̀* would denote " to give to the moon its share, part ", i.e. " praying to the moon." [1] It should be noted, however, that neither the members of the Commission nor anyone whom I questioned knew anything about this name of *Àmshap'*. It is to be assumed that this name was noted down from the lips of the Mountaineers among whom it had evidently been preserved. In further support of the possible close connection between *Àmshap'* [1796] and the moon cult (and the " tree spirit ") there is also the fact that the most important role in these festivals is assigned to St. George of Ilori, to which saint, as Javakhishvili has proved in his aforementioned work, is assimilated the moon cult. The procuring by this saint of a bullock, its " purification " by leading it three times from the mountains to the sea and back, the dedication to him of the cow *adzàtwə̀*, and, finally, the Gurian name of *zhwabràn*, *Iloroba*, prove that St. George is closely connected with the Abkhasian pleiade. Here is yet another curious fact. In the village of Bandza there is a church dedicated to St. George and called Shourkari. There still exists here the following custom: On the Monday [2] following Low Sunday, after the domestic offering, the populace repair to the church, and on their way, singing *Kyrie eleison*, they uproot a tree without the use of any implement, carry it three times around the wall enclosing the church, and offer it to St. George. The tree is then left within the church enclosure until the next year when it is replaced by a fresh one. This, in my opinion, symbolizes the victory of St. George over the moon (= *t'ut'a* in Megrelian, and over the " tree ").[3] Such a custom also [1911] prevails in the village Opshkvit'i, in Lower Imeret'i, where on the 23rd April the populace offers, in the same manner as at Bandza, a tree to St. George.[4]

1796 1911 Judging from the description of *The Supplication of the Leybaa*, by the priest N. Pateyna, which has been preserved in its purest state,

[113] [1] Cf. N. Y. Marr, *On the Religious Beliefs of the Abkhasians*, p. 133 (or its translation in this Journal, pp. 175–6.)

[2] " Monday " in Megrelian is *t'ut'ashkhi*, that is, the day of the moon (I. Kipshidze, op. cit., s.v. *dghe*). Noteworthy is Lamberti's description of the fear of the moon by the Megrelians.

[3] According to the information given me by Sh. P'aghava and El. Ot'khmezuri.

[4] *O-pshkvit'-i*, judging from its form, is of Megrelian origin.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

 796 171

Wednesday was the day of the prayer to the tree spirit, with both the Abkhasians and the K'art'vels (and Megrels),[1] which is partly confirmed by the Megrelian name of this day, i.e. *jumashkha*; the latter consists of *juma* and *shkha* (Geo. *dghe*). What does the first component word denote? May it not be derived from the Abkhasian word *ajə̀ma*, she-goat? The Pshavs have preserved the more salient *jumaghis jvari*, wherein *jumaghi* = *ajəmagh* denoting "goat-seed, goat-male", he-goat. This term may have been obtained from the custom of the Abkhasians of dedicating, or offering, exclusively, a goat to the tree spirit. This supposition finds further confirmation in the legend of Dsatchkhur, which procured exclusively for its festivals the wild goat (male).

One may also note the concordance between the names of some days in the Megrelian language, and the fact that it is just on these days that the cult is observed of those gods to whom these days are dedicated. Thus on the Monday (*t'ut'ashkha*) the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice to the moon; on the Wednesday (*jumashkha*) they observe the cult of the tree, and on the Tuesday (*t'akhashkha*) the cult of the mother-earth.[2]

III. Nàn-ħwa

The Abkhasians call the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin 796
(15th August) (*a*) *Nàn-ħwa*.[3] They observe with great reverence both *Nàn-ħwa* and the Lent of the Assumption. With *Nàn-ħwa* are connected the following superstitions of the Abkhasians:—

(*a*) *Àwyəst'ad-lə̀khəra* (Meg. *Dchindchat'oba*)

Abkhasians associate the night before the 1st August with 789
increased activity on the part of evil spirits *àwyəst'ad*, demons; and [776]

[1] N. Janashia evidently here uses *k'art'vel* as a generic term, including Megrels, but etymologically and linguistically such use of the term is definitely inadmissible. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The last two comparisons are made by the author, because for *jumashkha* he had also another etymology in connection with the Abkhasian *a-j*, oak, with which he identifies the Megrelian *ja*, tree; while in the first part (*t'akha-*) of the word *t'akhashkha*, he saw the Megrelian *dikha*, earth, soil. These doubtful etymologies have been eliminated. On the other hand, cf. *nertchi*, in I. Kipshidze's *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v., where this term is interpreted as "the basis of something, or the ground on which a house stands", and since the prayer dedicated to *nertchi*, or "master, lord" *nertchi*, as to a kind of deity, cannot be performed in a house with a wooden floor, I. Kipshidze concluded "that *nertchi* is god of the earth", in which supposition he was to a certain extent supported by definitions of the same word, given by lexicographers (S. S. Orbeliani: "the external side of the bottom"; Tchubinov (I): "bottom, the lower part of a vessel"; Tchub (II): "the lower part of the vessel, of the pitcher"). These materials N. Janashia supplements in his letter, dated 16th April, thus: "In Imeret'i *nertchi* denotes ceiling (see also V. Beridze, *Sitqvishona*, The Dictionary, s.v.), while in Megrelia, on the other hand, the rite is known under the name of *p'udzeshi do nertchish khvama*, 'the praying of the foundation and ceiling' if not 'of the floor'." (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[3] In my opinion *Nan(an)* denotes mother, and *ħwa*, "says" (from *aħwara*, see above, p. 124, note 2), that is, "for the mother," "the mother's day."

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

they, therefore, take precautionary measures to avoid becoming victims of the malignant will of the evil spirits. Nothing is left outside the house, or in the courtyard; nobody sleeps out of doors. To safeguard themselves from evil spirits, the superstitious attach pieces of wax to their hair. Crosses are made from *a-lakwə̀mha* (Geo. *lekumkha*),[1] to which are appended acanthus leaves, and these are placed at the courtyard gates, house doors, the gates of the kitchen gardens and cornfields, the poultry and cow-houses, etc. Acanthus leaves are hung around the necks of the domestic animals. The Abkhaz is convinced that *dwyəst'aă* dare not approach these crosses, which are also a protection against evil eyes.

During this night the evil spirits go out to look for booty, under the leadership of their mother, *Arapàp* (Meg. *rokapi*). On this expedition they are joined by human beings in whom evil spirits have taken their abode. Some of these evil spirits ride wolves or cats, and devour all the animals left outside by their owners who had no time, or had forgotten to drive them into shelter.[2] All evil spirits without exception stir abroad during this night; they wander growling from village to village and through the forests. For this reason it is easy to find out and catch them, and with this object youths go into the woods, where they make a large fire, using the wood of *a-lakwə̀mha*. The youngsters hide behind the bushes and watch out to see if they can recognize those of their neighbours into whom an evil spirit has entered. It is believed that the demons never pass a bonfire without stopping and warming themselves a little by it. Often quarrels arise on this ground, with unpleasant consequences. This custom of seeking after the evil spirits, "demons," is called *Awyəst'aă lə̀khəra*, which denotes "the catching of the demon"; it is also known under the Megrelian name of *dchindchat'oba*. To this day an Abkhaz believes that an evil spirit can enter into, and remain in, a human body, particularly in that of an old woman.

The chief *dwyəst'aă* is the eldest son of the sister of God, and that is why He, being a blood relation, cannot destroy him, although he may frighten him off with thunder. Here it will be appropriate to quote the following popular story:—

"At the time of the partition of the work between God and the devil, the former, exercising the right of seniority,[3] suggested to the devil that they should divide the world between them. The latter

[1] The Russian *krushina*, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Garden, that is, *alaternus* (R. Eristov mentions the plant *lshukha*, but he does not explain it. Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*).

[2] To safeguard an animal from wild beasts when he strays in the forest, they "bind the mouth" of the wild animals as follows: a pair of scissors is tied and a suitable prayer is uttered. "A sure remedy."

[3] The younger divides, and the elder chooses.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

agreed. During the night God caused the earth to be covered with luxuriant vegetation. Captivated by the beauty of vegetation the devil suggested to God that the best way to divide the world between them would be for one to have the earth and the other the vegetation. God took as his share the earth, and the devil received the vegetation. God then ordered him to remove his vegetation immediately. Only now did the devil realize his mistake, which, however, he rectified thus: he restored the vegetation to God, and in return for it he begged and obtained from Him the right to the souls of those who fall from the trees, having climbed them without first praying to God for their safety. . . ."

(*b*) *Barbanjia* (*dchiakokona*)

Before sunset on the 14th August the Abkhasian youths light, in their respective courtyards, a fire of flax straw (at present, owing to the lack of this straw, they use dry fern, etc.). Each person leaps thrice through the flame of this fire, shouting " I have burnt the evil spirit; I have burnt the evil spirit ". By so leaping through the flame an Abkhaz " purifies " himself of the evil spirit. After they have leapt three times through the flame each throws a piece of salt into the burning fire, and then, altogether, they begin to beat the fire with sticks to extinguish it, at the same time shouting the above quoted words. At the conclusion of the whole operation, the neighbours inform each other of their victory over the evil spirit by firing a gun. This manner of destroying the evil spirits is called " the burning of the demon " or *Barbanjia*. The denotation of the word is incomprehensible to me.[1]

(*c*) *Nân-ĥwa*

On the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, the " pure " (eldest) woman in the family prepares *a-tcha* (" a round bread stuffed with cheese "), boils a cock, and leads the whole family into the kitchen garden. Here they all kneel in front of the blossoming cucumber vine, and the eldest woman makes offering to Nan, saying: " the great Nan (*Nân-du*)! We who offer thee this sacrifice, established by our ancestors, humbly entreat thee to have mercy upon our house: increase it like the stars in the sky! " etc. The kneeling family repeat with her, *Âmen*. But no one knows who *Nan* (*Anan*) is; they only know that she is a goddess of procreation of the human race. Of the Mother of God there is no knowledge whatever.

[1] The Georgian equivalent is *Dchiakokona*, which is observed on Ash-Wednesday. *Dchiakokona*, according to Tchubinov, denotes " the leaping through the fire on Wednesday of Passion-week ".

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibZha

796 [619] On this day also they "lay the table", that is, prepare a dinner, for the souls of the deceased, unless the day happens to be one of abstinence, i.e. Wednesday or Friday. In the latter event the feast takes place on the following day.

(e) *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa*

On the same day of the Assumption is observed *Àdsyla-nə̀hwa* (cf. II (10)). The children are taken to a meadow where they are told to place their right legs against a tree. Each holding an *akwakwàr* in the right hand, they remain meekly in this position until the eldest in the family has addressed the prayer to "the spirit of the tree", entreating "the great part of the deity of the tree" to safeguard them from giddiness, from falling off the tree, and from injuries. The children must eat their *akwakwàr* without removing their legs from the tree.

(f) *Anàna-gùnda* (the goddess of bees)

796 231 This is both a spring and a summer feast.

In the spring, when the bees begin to hive, the eldest ("pure") woman of the family takes some hirse (Geo. *p'etvi*) and an egg, and [796] enters the apiary, where she passes the offerings three times over the hives, and prays to the goddess of the bees, *Anàna-gùnda*: "Submitting these as a pledge that the established offering will be made at the proper time, I humbly entreat thee, *Anàna-gùnda*, to be the guardian of our bees; safeguard them from all illnesses, multiply them, and grant them a good crop!" Hirse and the egg are hung over the apiary.

In the summer, between the 15th July and the end of August, before the gathering of the first honeycombs, more during August, on a Thursday or Saturday, the promised offering to the goddess [780] *Anàna-gùnda* is made. A large corncake (*a-mgal*), stuffed with cheese, is baked, and placed on one of the hives; also an egg. The family kneel in front of the offering, and the "pure" woman again invokes the mercy of *Anàna-gùnda* upon the honey bees, and says an improvised prayer. The family repeat a long drawn out *ǎämen*.

After the ceremony, she divides the corncakes crosswise, into four parts, with two strokes of the knife; and cuts these into smaller pieces. The family sit down there and then and dine. They do not [621] forget the neighbours, sending a small piece each. The remains are placed in a basket and hung up in the apiary. Everybody passing by is obliged to enter the apiary and bless the honey bees and, scattering about a little hirse, eat a piece of corncake.

[178] In ancient times when the Abkhasians irreproachably observed all the rites, the gods were more merciful to them. Thus, the goddess

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

of the bees as a sign of her good disposition towards a given family placed an egg (the egg of *Anàna-gùnda*) in one of the hives. No matter how much honey they took from that hive, there would always be a plentiful supply of it.[1]

IV. K'IRSA

Christmas is one of the four chief holidays[2] of the year. Abkhasians call it *K'irsa* (Megr. *K'irse*), which denotes Christ. An Abkhaz considers it a great disgrace if he fails on this day to kill a goat or some other animal. On this day "the table is laid" also for the souls of ancestors.

(a) *Agwə-nə̀hwa*

For some families it is obligatory to make an offering early in the morning on this day to *Agwə-nə̀hwa*, for which *akwakwə̀r* are baked. The supplicant entreats that *Agwə-nə̀hwa* grant them the warmth of his eyes and his heart. In translation the word denotes, "praying to heart." This "praying" is also known to the Gurians, under the name of "praying for the womb" (Geo. *Mutslis salotsavi*); Megrelians call it *Khatsitsi*.[3] According to I. Kipshidze, it is the New Year's Day breakfast.[4] In my opinion it is nothing more than a survival of the supplication described below.

(b) *Got'anùa* (*sharp'ə̀-nə̀hwa*)

Some *gvari*-s have preserved to this day the following custom. On Christmas Eve, the family go to bed very early; they rise, however, at midnight, and begin praying. Enough chickens are killed to provide one for every member of the family (blackbirds also may be used), or in their place a young goat; *akwakwə̀r* baked. All this is offered to *Got'anùa*; the food is consumed immediately after the prayer is ended, and the remains, if any, are not left but burnt without fail. All return to bed. The dawn must find them asleep. In Megrelian *got'ənua* denotes morning-twilight, dawn, to grow light, to dawn, the Abkhasian equivalent of which is *sharp'-nə̀hwa*, the morning prayer; the Megrelian term, however, is more in use.

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family,

[1] *Anàna*, in my opinion, is derived from *an*, mother; *gùnda*, probably from *gundi*, a swarm, a collection of something.

[2] Namely, the New Year, Easter, the Assumption, and Christmas.

[3] *Khatsitsi—khatsetsi* is called also a bride. (Cf. I. Kipshidze, *Gram. of the Megrelian Languages*, s.v. *khat'etsi*.) (Ed. *Khrist. Vostok*.)

[4] *Grammar of the Megrelian Language*, s.v. (where is also a reference to the explanation of the same word in Georgian by V. Beridze, *Sitqvishona*, s.v., Ed. *Kh. V.*).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzv16zha

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family, being angry with her masters, took a portion of the dough for *akwakwar* destined for the " god " *Got'anùa*, and placing it in a scoop of bitter-gourd (*akwapey*, Geo. *kope*), hid it in the loft. As usual the family went to bed after the ceremony. But unfortunately for them the offended *Got'anùa* soundly thrashed all of them, using for the purpose the very same scoop in which had been hidden the dough destined for himself. This *gvari* makes propitiatory offerings at the will of sorcerers to *Got'anùa* twice a year, during the night before Christmas and before the Assumption.

Got'anùa, under the name of *Okhvàmuri*, evidently spread throughout Megrelia during the missionaryship of Lamberti.[1]

V. Deities whose Cults have no Fixed Dates

1. *Et-nòkha—Àga-nòkha*

The sea, like other manifestations of nature, has its own " part of deity ", called *Àga-inkhwò* or *àga-intswakhwò*. An Abkhaz makes an offering to this deity when he goes to the sea coast for any considerable time. The sea deity is not to be trifled with ; if it is slighted it becomes turbulent, it surges, and punishes the unrespectful. Therefore even the children are forbidden to throw pebbles, or to spit into the sea. The worship of this deity has been preserved in its purest form among the Bzib Abkhasians, namely among the peasantry of the Gudout (Gudaut) district, of the *gvari* of Amp'arùa. It has been described by A. Tch(ukbar), in *Sotrudnik Zakavkazskoy Missii* (" The Collabarator of the Transcaucasian Mission "), 1912, p. 373 sqq., where the deity *Et-nòkh-Àga-nòkha* is called *Et-nykh Ag-Nykh*. *Àga* denotes sea, *(a)nòkh*—" icon." But what does the word *Et* denote ?[2]

2. *Àshkha-intswakhwò* (god of mountains)

Mountains also have " their part of God " known under the name of *Àshkha-intswakhwò*. *Àshkha* denotes mountain ; *intswakhwò*, " his (of the male rational being) part of God." I have pointed out above that the Abkhaz often uses the word *nòkha* in the sense of god, which in the Christian faith is understood, or more correctly, translated, as icon. The god of mountains " governs " all the mountains and the beasts inhabiting them. Abkhaz shepherds make offerings to this god twice a year, in the spring when they drive the cattle to the mountains, and in the autumn when they drive them back. To him are subject also mountain game. In order to preserve the game from

[1] A. Lamberti, op. cit., pp. 148-9.

[2] This word manifests a consonance with the Assyro-Babylonian name of the god of the sea, *Ea*. Is this a mere coincidence ?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZvibZhq

6. *Akhyə Zoshən*

The Abkhasians ascribe diseases generally to supernatural influences or gods, but some diseases have their own special gods. The god of small-pox, for example, is *Akhyə Zoshən* (the golden Zoskhan), and also his consort, the goddess *Khania Shkwdkwa* (Khania the white). How important are the gods of the Abkhasians may be judged from the following circumstance which took place during the spring of 1914 in one of the settlements of the village Jgerdi. Throughout the winter and spring of the year Abkhasia was in the grip of a severe epidemic of small-pox. In order to check the spread of the disease vaccinators were sent to the affected areas. The following account of what happened was described to me by P. Janashia, one of the vaccinators. A certain settlement, fearing that the gods might wreak vengeance upon them, refused to admit the vaccinators; they preferred to safeguard themselves against this terrible disease, *atswarp'shdzd* (small-pox), by the adoption of the gods. *Atswd* denotes skin, rind, and *ap'shdzd*, pretty, beautiful; the whole, in translation, denoting " that which decorates (beautifies) the skin ".

By pooling their resources, the settlement raised enough money to buy a couple of snow-white goats and a sufficiency of provisions, and made an expedition into the forest. Here, amidst the quietude and peace of over-hanging leaves, a sumptuous feast was prepared for the divine guests. When everything was ready, and the victim had been placed, according to custom, on *ashwamkyadt'*, the head of the settlement said the prayer and made the offering to the gods. Nearby stood two bedsteads, adorned with silk bedclothes, on which sat two young women, an *amauri* and a peasant woman; their naked breasts were covered with silk handkerchiefs. The whole assembly knelt down, while the head of the settlement implored the gods to accept their offering by kissing the breasts of the most beautiful women of the settlement, and thus become, in accordance with the ancestral custom, adopted sons of the settlement. Near the " foster-mothers of gods " stood two of the finest horses, one with a side saddle. The sumptuous feast followed the ceremony of adoption, and afterwards the people, holding the horses by the bridle, on which were to be riding the newly adopted gods, *Akhyə Zoshən* and *Khania Shkwdkwa*, escorted the precious guests to the accompaniment of song, far away from the settlement. Thus they " turned away ", or warded off, the small-pox.

" You may not believe it," an Abkhaz from the settlement told me, " but this ' adoption ' saved us from the small-pox; not one of us fell a victim to it. You, the learned, have caused our ruin by bringing down upon us the anger of the gods of our fathers," he concluded, with a deep sigh.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaħwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little [243] wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the [462] fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible [784] herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; [263] *dsàsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

[512] Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ħwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the [340] house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), [352] on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, [539] and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nəkhak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number 776 seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head 801 of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[243] [1] *Alaħwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchaskuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[193] [2] *ħwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[821] [3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Ayt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Ayt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are [171] included in both pleiades.

Àyt'ar!" etc. The dough is kneaded from the same leaven, only when calling to the cows they exclaim *wootsw*. Shrove Saturday is dedicated to *zhwabràn*. 796

3. *Anəkha-nə̀ħwa* (*Dopu-nə̀kha*)

Near Adzvibzha is a little village called Dopukət, where dwell the Dopua-s who are attendants (Geo. *me-khat-ur-i*) of the "icon"—*Dopu-nə̀kha*, revered by all the Adzvibzhaans and Dopukətans. This "icon" is known also as *zhwəjən-nə̀kha*, i.e. Sujuna icon, under which is meant, no doubt, St. George of Sujuna in Megrelia. This "icon" is called *zhwaràk'yə* by the wives of the Dpua-s, for the reason that the wives of Abkhasians have no right to call by name the eldest members of their husband's *gvari*, or his relations. D. I. Gulia thinks that the word *zhwarak'yə* is the same as the Georgian *zvaraki*, meaning sacrificial animal (the ancient Georgian *zuaraki* = *zowaraki*, Armenian *zowarak*).[1] In honour of this "icon" every Adzvibzhaan and Dopukətan family bakes, on the Shrove Sunday, a cake from millet flour (*sorghum*, in Geo. *ghomi*), which is offered as a gift to it. Prayers are said by the head of each family, and a handful of salt and a piece of wax candle are put aside for the "icon". The eldest of the Dopua goes round the houses and collects the salt and wax. 776 [602] 796

Mamsər Dopua told us: "At the present time our icon is in the village Sujuna."

4. *Àyt'ar-nə̀ħwa* (*khwazhwə̀-kərà*, in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərà*)

On the first Monday[2] of the Great Fast the ritual of supplication to Àyt'ar himself is observed. This supplication is otherwise called *khwazhwə̀-kərà* (in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərà*). *À-khwazhwə̀* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) is a special cake, sometimes coniform, and sometimes of round flattened shape. These cakes, which may be stuffed with cheese or not, but on this occasion are lenten, are invariably included in sacrificial offerings of the Abkhasians. They may be boiled, as on this occasion, or baked. *A-kərà* denotes "to hold". After it is called, in Abkhasian, the month of February, *khwazhwəkə̀n-mzà* (*a-mza*, month, moon). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) denotes also rhododendron, the leaves of which are indispensable in the making of sacrificial maize-cakes. [262] [782] [805] [824] [782]

[1] As a cult term this word is met with in the form زبرخ in Sabaean (Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, ii, 24, 37, cf. p. 191, n. 179), see N. Marr, *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhasians and Alans*, etc. (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Pb., 1906, vol. xvi, p. 203. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The Megrelians call this Monday *t'ut'ashkha bednieri*, lucky, or happy Monday, lit. the moon-day. With the Abkhasians, too, *Ayt'ar's* day is Monday; they pray to the moon exclusively on Mondays. [821]

/41 cont./

515 782 823 [783] Fearing to defile it, the Abkhaz avoids bathing in running water; if he bathes, upon coming out /42/ of the water he takes three stones and says, "I sinned against you today; I went into the water and bathed, but you, forgive me." With this prayer, he passes the pebbles around his head with his hands and throws them into the water.

3.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Rainbow

753 [755] [782] The ceremony in honor of the rainbow, which is not obligatory for all, is performed for the greater part on persons whose sickness, according to the female fortune-teller, is caused by the rainbow. A prolonged yellowness of the face, a weakening of the organism, instability of character -- the [821] Abkhaz attributes all these to the fact that the sick person entered water at the very moment when the rainbow was drinking from it.

755 782 "Sinless" old women, having planned a sacrifice and promised a prayer, lead the sick person out to a brook; they take with them two fried capons, two stuffed loaves of unleavened bread in the shape of a tongue, and other provisions, as in the performance of the ceremony in honor of the water. On both sides of the brook, clean objects are laid out, such as clothes, silver, etc., a little bridge made of thread is thrown over the river from one bank to another. Having prepared all this, the praying-woman, with a doll that has been prepared beforehand in her hands, walks around the sick person, who is kneeling down covered with a piece of calico, and prays for him to the rainbow, known by the name Eliaphshi; then she takes a candle and addresses a similar prayer to the "Mistress Mother of the Water," and her "lord husband." After praying over the provisions she takes some [789] of each dish and throws it into the water; she places the doll in a pumpkin, and, after adorning the latter with lighted

/42 cont./

755 782 [789] candles, she lets it float down the stream, saying, "Amuse yourself with this one, instead of the sick person." Finally the old praying-woman passes her hand over the sick person's back, raises him, and having given him liberty ("azati") from his ailment, she sends him home, instructing him not to look around on his way back. The food brought to the stream is eaten on the spot by the participants in the ceremony; the remains from the table are thrown into the water and the dishes washed clean.

This prayer-ritual is considered the most sacred of all in Abkhazia, and the name of the rainbow, Atsaqva, is pronounced with great reverence. The Abkhaz claims that as [821] a consequence of this ceremony in the rainbow's honor the rain appears.

/43/

4.

782 The Prayer-Ceremony in Honor of the Wind (Phsharnha)

A large loaf of bread with cheese is prepared, placed in a basket, and carried some distance from the house. Here [776] a prayer is said to "Lady Wind" (a deity of female sex), in [824] which she is asked to bring good and to carry off evil and to [777] deliver them from all sorts of misfortunes, etc. Then the middle part of the loaf is cut out, carried into the forest, and hung on an oak tree near the top. The next day, the one who first comes near the oak tree feasts on this offering.

5.

A Prayer in Honor of a Tree

782 824 On Assumption Day, vitushki are baked according to the number of men in the family; then the master of the house, with his household, approaches any kind of young tree and, putting his foot on it, prays, "Tree, give me your blessing and happiness ... that I may safely come down

/47 cont./

782 241 [776] The Abkhaz asks of Anaphanga, the goddess of crops: "Wherever I draw my furrow and strike with iron and with implement, may an abundance of grain be granted me; grant happiness to the sower and to the consumer." During reaping, when the sheaves are first brought home, the Abkhaz prays in honor of Anaphanga; during the fast of Assumption, however, a cross is made of the ears; kernels of maize and beans are fastened to a candle to avert possible harm by evil spirits, e.g., by Dzhadzha herself. This [776] Dzhadzha is an ugly goddess, short and fat; when she comes into a field she exclaims, "Natsvis, natsvis" (little finger! little finger!), i.e., the wish that the maize in that field grow no higher than a little finger, but if one pursues Dzhadzha with the words, "Raki dzaki, raki dzaki" ("cubit-span, cubit-span"), she leaves the field and her wish does not come true.

[243] Before the threshing of the gomi /millet/ the Abkhaz pray to the great goddesses to keep the whole family in good health and to permit the whole household in future, and at the head the lady of the house herself, to gather at the beater for the threshing of the gomi (satsekhveli).

13.

A Prayer for the Bees

782 231 The Abkhaz bake a round loaf of bread with cheese, take it to the bee-garden, and pray to Ananagunda for the preservation of their bees; upon returning home, they break the loaf and eat it without looking at one another, for which some stand facing one door, some another.

14.

Prayer to the Sun and the Moon

782 821 The Abkhaz addresses the sun with the following prayer: "Sunlight, withhold not your benevolence from us, warmth

/47 cont./

782 and light, well-being and success in everything; grant
821 beauty, charm, and elegance to our maidens so that, like you, they may shine, glitter, and warm people." In the prayer to the moon, they express the wish that the children should become like it in brilliance.

/48/

15.

Prayer to Khphath and Khvnash

782 This prayer is offered on the Saturday of the week of
[796] Thomas, with cheese, bread, wine, candles, etc. brought as offerings. The aim is to solicit health and prosperity for the family. On one of the following Saturdays a similar prayer is addressed to Khvnash. Khphath and Mdzhath are
[551] men's names in Abkhazia.

16.

"Ananaha"

782 Anan means "mother." The oldest woman of the
796 household places some money on a loaf of bread (Anan l phara = money of Anan) and goes into the kitchen-garden where she places three cucumber-leaves on the loaf of bread and the same number on her own head. She then fastens a lighted candle to a cucumber stalk and, holding incense in her hands, prays, "Mothers and creators, do not let me have grief from my sons: do not cast me into sorrow because of them, but let me see them prosper." A similar prayer is said to Ashatsanha, the god-creator or god-father. A cow and money are offered in sacrifice to him. During Lent, the village maidens also used to pray to the "Mother of the Waters" that she might grant them long and thick hair.

17.

Prayer for the Ear

753 The Abkhaz says, "ahsa r lmha i klou," which means

/49 cont./

755 782 ram or a lamb, together with loaves of bread, etc. All this is taken to the place selected, and the patient himself [562] is led there. No women are present, for they are not allowed to approach this sacred place. A venerable man, holding a candle, declares, "Great god, as is proper and as the fortune-teller has prescribed, the worshiper today stands before you; he has brought sacrificial animals and loaves of bread ... Have mercy upon him, be merciful to him, if he has sinned before you, forgive him. I beg you to let him go from this day forward, to leave him and free him like a loosened knot." While saying these words, the venerable man moves the candle around the patient, lights it, and places it nearby. He then /50/ takes another candle [796] and prays to Michael-Gabriel. Upon the completion of this ceremony, the sick person returns home alone, while the others sit down to a meal.

One such ceremony, however, is not considered sufficient for the send-off of so eminent a guest as a god. The [796] Abkhaz is therefore obliged to repeat the ceremony annually. One day a week is set aside as a holiday in honor of that same supreme being; this day is considered such a sacred one that the house even remains unswept, etc.

19.

Aphi

776 [821] Aphi (2) is the god and master of the thunder, lightning,

[113] 2. See Sborn. sveden. o kavk. gortsakh, No. V, Tiflis, 1871, pp. 15-16, article "Religioznyye verovaniye abkhaztsev /Religious beliefs of the Abkhaz/," by A. -- where, by the way, this deity is called Afy.

[782] and all atmospheric phenomena in general. The most solemn prayers in Abkhazia are offered in honor of this god.

/50 cont./

1782 On the day set for the prayer, usually at the time when
733 the herds are driven into the mountains for the summer and
[796] when they return in autumn, the shepherds of the village break up into several groups, each group choosing a pretty spot in the forest near a brook or river. Some rams, according to the number of participants, are slaughtered, and the oldest shepherd of those departing for the mountains addresses Aphi, begging him to preserve them as well as their herd from the thunder-
[562] bolts. Women and children do not dare to be present at the prayers to Aphi, and women may not even pronounce his name. When talking of Aphi, the Abkhaz usually say "khakhikal" ("the one above" or "the supreme one.")

1782 During a prolonged drought, a prayer with sacrifices is
731 offered in honor of Aphi. The best bull is chosen from the
789 herd and a day is set for the sacrifice. The villagers bring gomi, bread, fresh cheese, and a jug of wine. The most venerable old man holds a rope fastened to the horns of the bull; removing his cap, he pronounces the following prayer, "Oh Aphi, master of thunder, lightning, and rain! have pity on your people. Our harvests have dried up, the grass is withered, our livestock perishes from want of feed, and therefore /51/ death from hunger threatens us. Command the rain-clouds to gather, command the thunder to peal, the lightning to flash, and send us rain to save the perishing people." The participants say "Amen," and the sacrificial animal is killed and its meat cooked. After all the dishes, made from ingredients brought with him, have been pre-
[533] pared and laid out on mats, the old man who said the prayer repeats it, and then, with the singing of a hymn in praise of Aphi, the feast begins. This hymn is called Anchva rysshva
[821] and is sung in honor of Aphi, not only at feasts, but also during thunderstorms. In the first instance, it is sung with thankfulness for the gifts that are enjoyed, in the second, to move Aphi to send good weather. During the feasts, one
1782 of the elders usually addresses a speech to those present, re-
731 minding them that all they are then enjoying comes with the
574 blessing of Aphi and suggesting that they thank him. Then

/51 cont./

782 one of those present begins to glorify the god: "Anchva
731 dukhva zlyphkha khkhaura!" "O you who descends from
574 heaven with lightning and ascend to heaven with thunder, who knows the number of the stars in heaven and of the sands at the bottom of the sea ..." etc., and he concludes the poem with the words, "akhdau." All those present, divided into two groups, repeat every line of the hymn in turn, always three times over.

782 The killing of one of the herd by lightning unfailingly
821 evokes prayer to Aphi; on the other hand, if he is not appeased by sacrifice, a repetition of his visit must be expected. The owner of the dead animal invites the inhabitants of the village, without distinction as to age or sex. On the spot where the animal was killed, a tower is built about one and a half sagene in height, so that beasts of prey cannot climb it. All those present surround the killed animal, join hands, and dance, half of them singing "Voetla" and the other half answering "Chaupar," and they raise the animal onto the tower, still singing and dancing, and leave it there as a victim for the birds of prey. Then the owner of the animal killed by lightning sacrifices a bull to Aphi, at the same time thanking him for the present visit and begging him nonetheless to spare him future visits. Various dishes are prepared from the meat of the sacrificed animal; bread, cheese, and wine are brought, and those present feast all day long at the expense of the man who suffered the loss. The day the animal was killed by lightning becomes so memorable in the family that has thus been visited by Aphi that neither the head of the family /52/ nor his children will give
[527] [931] anyone anything on the anniversary of that day, saying that they expect a visit from Aphi on that day.

[766] The same ceremony is performed when a person has been struck by lightning. During the dance around the corpse, none of the relatives of the dead man dares to weep; otherwise all the participants will be struck dead by a thunder-bolt.

/52 cont./

821 766 "Recently," writes Mr. Giorgidze in the newspaper Iveriia of 1888, "a man was being buried with laments and sobbing. At that moment two bulls grazing nearby were struck by a thunderbolt and immediately the crying and sobbing turned into dancing and singing, "Atlarchouph." The dead bulls were lifted up and placed on a tree, and the deceased was buried in a deathly silence."

The corpse of a person struck by a thunderbolt is placed in a coffin, put on a tower, and left there until nothing but his bones remain; the coffin is then taken down and buried with the normal burial ceremonies and the celebration of the funeral-banquet established by custom.

175 469 [766] [821] It was probably this custom of such placing or suspending of the corpses of those killed by Aphi that led the ancient Greco-Roman writers and the geographer Vakhushti to state that in Abkhazia and Colchis dead men were not buried, but their corpses hung in trees. These are Vakhushti's words: "Though Christians by creed, the Abkhaz do not know their religion and are therefore considered to be idolaters. And indeed, instead of burying their dead, they dress them in their best clothes and weapons, lock them in boxes, and place them in trees." Apollonius Rhodius (250-200 B.C.) wrote of Colchis, "Many grapes and willows grew there, from the tops of which corpses of the dead were suspended by chains. Even now the inhabitants of Colchis consider it a crime to burn corpses of men or even to bury them and cover them with burial mounds; they are put in undressed hides of bulls and suspended from trees far from the city. But the earth as well as the air gets its own, for the corpses of women are buried in it; such is their law" (1). The same thing is

[113] 1. Greko-Rimskiie pisateli o kavkaze /Greco-Roman authors on the Caucasus/, by Gan, I, p. 49.

attested in Variae Historiae: "The Colchi put their dead in hides, sew them up and hang them on trees" (2). Nymphodorus

[770 cont.]

755 might leave. As soon as the afflicted person is able, he himself goes to the water with a prayer-woman; there he kneels and
[782] offers up a hen to the mother of the waters, a rooster to her husband, and a candle to each of them and to her female servant (Abza 'avabzatšav = benefactress, intercessor). The woman prays and strokes the sick person on the back for "deliverance" (azati).

If someone suffers from jaundice or debility, [771] the "irreproachable" elders lead him to the river, lay his clothing, silver articles, etc. on both banks, and make a bridge of twisted yarn over the river; the prayer-woman then circles the sick person with a doll and prays to the rainbow in the name of the Eliap'ši, to the mother of the waters, and to her husband. She
[782] casts into the water pieces of the food that was brought along: roasted chickens, tongue-shaped flat cakes, etc., and she allows the doll to float downstream in a gourd with a burning candle, while she prays that the goddess amuse herself with it rather than with the sick person. Finally she gives the latter "deliverance," and he may not look back on the way home (cf. p. 924 f. [untranslated]).

231 When rinderpest struck, the Kemirkehe used to dig a
789 tunnel in a steep river-bank and in the middle of this a pit in which they fastened a black cat with a silver belt. They covered the pit with boards and earth, ignited a fire on top by rubbing two sticks together, and drove the cattle through the river and the tunnel, to the accompaniment of the priests' litany. Afterwards the cat was freed.

842 The above-mentioned threefold prayer at the water is aimed at fertility when one "leads to the water" a young woman
844 for the first time, during which an egg is thrown in, and, in the case of a woman in childbed, food for the infant.

787 The Abkhaz read signs for future events, for a favorable
[821] or unfavorable outcome for undertakings, from the stars, from the form of the moon, from meeting certain animals or human beings, and also, in the manner of the Tatars, from the cracks in a sheep's shoulder-blade that has been cast into the fire (see Vol. II, p. 325).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Àyt'ar!" etc. The dough is kneaded from the same leaven, only when calling to the cows they exclaim *wootsw*. Shrove Saturday is dedicated to *zhwabràn*. 796

3. *Anɔ̀kha-nɔ̀ħwa* (*Dopu-nɔ̀kha*)

Near Adzvibzha is a little village called Dopukət, where dwell the Dopua-s who are attendants (Geo. *me-khat-ur-i*) of the "icon"—*Dopu-nɔ̀kha*, revered by all the Adzvibzhaans and Dopukətans. This "icon" is known also as *shwəjɔ̀n-nɔ̀kha*, i.e. Sujuna icon, under which is meant, no doubt, St. George of Sujuna in Megrelia. This "icon" is called *zhwaràk'yə* by the wives of the Dpua-s, for the reason that the wives of Abkhasians have no right to call by name the eldest members of their husband's *gvari*, or his relations. D. I. Gulia thinks that the word *zhwarak'yə* is the same as the Georgian *zvaraki*, meaning sacrificial animal (the ancient Georgian *zuaraki* = *zowaraki*, Armenian *zowarak*).[1] In honour of this "icon" every Adzvibzhaan and Dopukətan family bakes, on the Shrove Sunday, a cake from millet flour (*sorghum*, in Geo. *ghomi*), which is offered as a gift to it. Prayers are said by the head of each family, and a handful of salt and a piece of wax candle are put aside for the "icon". The eldest of the Dopua goes round the houses and collects the salt and wax. 776 [602] 796

Mamsər Dopua told us: "At the present time our icon is in the village Sujuna."

4. *Àyt'ar-nɔ̀ħwa* (*khwazhwɔ̀-kərà*, in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərà*)

On the first Monday[2] of the Great Fast the ritual of supplication to Àyt'ar himself is observed. This supplication is otherwise called *khwazhwɔ̀-kərà* (in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərà*). *À-khwazhwɔ̀* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) is a special cake, sometimes coniform, and sometimes of round flattened shape. These cakes, which may be stuffed with cheese or not, but on this occasion are lenten, are invariably included in sacrificial offerings of the Abkhasians. They may be boiled, as on this occasion, or baked. *A-kərà* denotes "to hold". After it is called, in Abkhasian, the month of February, *khwazhwəkɔ̀n-mzà* (*a-mza*, month, moon). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) denotes also rhododendron, the leaves of which are indispensable in the making of sacrificial maize-cakes. [262] [782] [805] [824] [782]

[1] As a cult term this word is met with in the form زجرخ in Sabaean (Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, ii, 24, 37, cf. p. 191, n. 179), see N. Marr, *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhasians and Alans*, etc. (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Pb., 1906, vol. xvi, p. 203. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The Megrelians call this Monday *t'ut'ashkha bednieri*, lucky, or happy Monday, lit. the moon-day. With the Abkhasians, too, *Ayt'ar's* day is Monday; they pray to the moon exclusively on Mondays. [821]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

796 sacrificial maize-cakes. Also on this day, in the early evening, are prepared from the above-mentioned leaven many *à-khwazhwə*, and three loaves, made in the shape, respectively, of the moon, the sun, and *alaħwara*.[1] In the latter are placed as many *aklakùt-s* (little wooden hammers, models of those used in threshing millet, or maize) as there are women in the family and an extra one symbolizing the desire for their increase. This correlation of the number of hammers with the number of women in the family arose, of course, from the fact that the threshing of millet was the woman's job. Soups of phasel and of fresh nettle (*à-khwats*) are also prepared. On this day no edible herb of any kind is allowed to be consumed, or used in cooking; *dsàsəm*, the Abkhasians say, that is, "it is not proper," "it is forbidden" (in Megrelian *vashiners*).

Late in the afternoon, when the cattle have returned from the fields, the prayers begin.

(*a*) *Antswà-ħwa* (for God).[2]

The whole family gathers together. On the threshold of the house, *àishwa*, is placed a long and narrow table (in Megrelian *tabaki*), on which are laid all the eatables described above. Behind this little table stands the head of the family, and behind him all the other members. The wax candles are lighted. The head of the family takes three *à-khwazhwə*, and, addressing *Antswà*, God, prays that His favours and bounties may be showered upon his family, etc. The family repeat with him, *àămen*. These cakes are put aside.

(*b*) *Àyt'ar*.

After this the head of the family takes three new *a-khwazhwə*, and says: *Wa, Àyt'ar—bzhwàyt'ar! bzhyə-nə̀khak zənàp-yanù, bzhyə—tswəmzàk zzəkədr—dso*, etc., "*O, Àyt'ar—seven Àyt'ar, in the hands of whom are seven icons (to whom are subject seven gods), and to whom are lit seven candles,"—be thou the guardian of our herds! Multiply them so that we may milk seven men's load of milk! Let no harm come to our herd, except the old wool and old dung!* etc. The introduction, given in Abkhasian, is uttered by all, while everybody improvises the rest of the supplication as best they can, repeating the mystic number seven every minute. As is shown by the introduction *Àyt'ar* is the head of a group of seven gods. The number seven appears in many prayers.[3]

[1] *Alaħwara*—a large mortar (Geo. *tchashuri*) in which millet (*ghomi*) is husked.

[2] *ħwa* is an abbreviated form of the word denoting "he says"; cf. the Russian *gort* heard in the existing colloquial speech.

[3] All this, and the fact that the Abkhasians up to this day still pray to the moon and the sun, makes us wonder whether the septenary *Àyt'ar* is closely connected with the Babylono-Assyrian septenary of gods, particularly as the names of the gods *An*, *Anu—Antswà*, and *Istar—Àyt'ar*, are very similar, while the moon and the sun are included in both pleiades.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibZha

796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alòshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[262] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[754] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[776] In the opinion of the commission, *Alòshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[231] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight."[1]

The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If
[821] someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri*, *vàri*, *khəzò*, *jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*wàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khəzò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

776 (*d*) *Àmza-nəhwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

* See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the
[104] production of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ʒ" (the ancient Arabic 'ain) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of
[171] Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Aralòs* (cf. *Alòshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Araia*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Àmza, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, guard over our men! 796
Grant them beauty and strength!" Simultaneously the men-folk [776]
crowd around him, for the moon is the god of men; the women-folk
stand at a distance. "Increase our cattle and all our weal! Burn out [821]
the eyes of the spell-binders, and the tongues of the evil-speakers! [754]
Wootsw, *Wootsw*!" the supplicant continues his incantation and, calling to the cattle, spills *k'uarpa* (*a-k'warpà* or *a-k'wərpà*) now in the direction of the sea, now towards the mountains.

"The moon is a man, and the sun is a woman," say the Abkhasians. [821]

I will now quote from my notes the following brief account 539
of a very characteristic Abkhasian tale:

(1) "Seven very rich Abkhasian brothers had no sisters; whereat they were very aggrieved. Eventually, however, a sister was born, but from that moment the wealth of the brothers began to diminish; every night some invisible power drove away their cattle in herds. The youngest brother who was endowed with the gift of prescience (*ashàna*) said to the others: 'A demon has entered our house in the guise of our sister; if we do not kill him, our days and those of all in the whole district are numbered!' The brothers, however, would not listen to him. Thereupon he left his home, and travelled abroad, where he married a beautiful maiden-sun (*Àmra*). After several years, feeling home-sick, he set out to visit his brothers. Alas! what did he find? There was nobody left alive in the whole district except a mouse and his own sister-demon (the witch). She at once devoured his horse, and stepped aside to sharpen her teeth. On the advice of the mouse, the moon-brother, to save his life, took to his heels; he managed to inform his wife-sun of his misfortune, who hastened to deliver him. But the sister overtook her brother and began to devour him. By this time his wife Àmra had arrived. She pulled her husband, *Àmza*, towards her, but the demon pulled also; and so a deadlock ensued. *Antswà* decided the matter thus: he allowed the wife-sun to have her husband, the moon, for fifteen days, and the demon to have him for the remaining fifteen days of the month. And from that time began the phases of the moon. [821]
As soon as the moon becomes full it means that the demon has begun to devour Àmza, on which account the moon diminishes gradually; towards the end of Àmza's life his wife, full of love, comes to the rescue of her unfortunate husband, and as her caresses and care restore him to life the moon waxes again. When it is full the demon reappears and the story repeats itself!"

(2) "The Eclipse of the Moon. During the eclipse a monster, Atv [789]
(*Atòwyə*), falls upon the moon to devour it. In order to save their

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha.

539 [789] benefactor, the moon, the Abkhasians fire at the monster and thereby drive him away." [1]

(3) The Moon and the Sun. A beautiful Abkhasian widow woman had a son and a daughter, who often absented themselves from home for the whole day; they would go off early in the morning and return only late in the evening. No amount of coaxing or tenderness on the part of the mother sufficed to keep the children at home or stop them from indulging in their daily adventure, so she decided to shadow them. She found they were seated under the shadow of an ancient oak, in a thick forest, enjoying themselves in an agreeable pastime with the moon and the sun. Before them were all sorts of eatables. The mother, flying into a passion, flung fresh dung at the moon and the sun. The sun-sister, being a more fastidious creature, washed herself, but the less particular moon-brother did not do so, and hence arose the dark patches on the moon; the brother, the moon, and the sister, the sun,[2] then soared up to the sky for ever, while the widow and her children returned home."

[821] Here I will also note that the Abkhasians always welcome the new moon by looking at its reflection through a mirror, or over a silver piece.

[753] A certain mainly infantile disease, similar to convulsions, is called by the Abkhasians *ámzakra*, i.e. " to be caught by the moon ".

(*e*) *Àmra-nə̀hwa*, Prayer to the Sun.

794 [796] When he has finished the invocation addressed to Àmra (the moon), the supplicant takes the sun-shaped cake, and, with the women surrounding him, he says: " Thou, Àmra, *Àyt'ar intswakhwədà*, the great part of the great *Àyt'ar*, grant warmth, and caress the women of our family! Increase our cattle," etc., and then spills *k'warpa* (*a-k'warpà*) in the usual manner, uttering *wootsw*.

According to D. I. Gulìa, in the village of Dchilou they use the form *Amera* instead of *Àmra*.

(*f*) *Anàp'a-nàga*.

[796] After that the supplicant takes *alakwəra* (a large mortar) and, addressing himself to the god *Anàp'a-nàga*, says: " Thou, the great part of the great god *Àyt'ar*, send us the warmth of thine eyes and of

[1] Exactly what *Atèwyə* denotes is difficult to explain. In connection with the above quoted tale, the etymology of this word may, however, perhaps elucidate its significance. *Atè* denotes the barn- or screech-owl; *wy* may be the root from the word *a-owyə̀* (man); consequently *atèwyə* may denote " man-owl ". And by *atèwyə* is, perhaps, understood the sister devouring the brother-moon. [92]

[2] Their gender is often confused: sometimes the moon and the sun are sisters or brothers, sometimes the moon is brother and the sun sister.

[3] I think the Georgian word *mizezi*, cause, is derived from the Abkhasian *amaza*, cause (from *ámaa*, moon). (It is doubtful! Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

4. *Abna-intswakhwə* (god of the woods)

The woods also have their "part of deity", *Abna-intswakhwə*. *Abna* denotes wood, forest; *intswakhwə* we already know. When an Abkhaz enters a forest, or if he has to pass a night there, he prays to this deity for protection. I have, however, failed to collect more information about this god of the woods.

Abna-wowyə

In ancient times the forests of Abkhasia were inhabited by *Abna-wowyə*, "forest-people." *Abna* denotes forest, and *a-wowyə*, man. They were strong and courageous, but very ugly in appearance. Their bodies were covered with bristle-like hair. From their breasts projected a strange object, shaped like an axe and strong as steel, which served as a weapon; and by pressing an enemy to their breasts they could cut him into two. They preyed incessantly upon the people, who, however, in the long run, and with God's help, destroyed them. The last of them dwelt in an impassable forest, called Urak', near the village of Adzvibzha. In the same forest there lived also the courageous Khukhw Dchit'anàà, with his herd. Between Khukhw and this "forest-man" there was intense animosity. The ugly "forest-man" would come to Khukhw's hut every midnight, and inquire: "Dchit'anàà Khukhw,[1] art thou at home?" "Yes, I am. If thou art not an old woman come and fight me," responded the fearless Abkhaz. The "forest-man", however, would never agree to a single combat. Khukhw, tired at last of these childish pranks, resorted to a ruse. Placing a log in his bed, he went outside and hid behind a bush not far from the hut. At midnight the "forest-man" came as usual, and receiving no reply, he concluded that Khukhw was soundly asleep. Entering the hut and seeing, as he thought, the sleeping form of his enemy, he was about to aim a blow at the log, when the Abkhaz, who had crept in unawares, fired a shot at him. The "forest-man", although mortally wounded, managed to crawl away, and on the following morning Khukhw followed up the blood-stained footprints, and finding the dead body of his enemy, buried him with due honours. Khukhw appropriated the wealth of the last "forest-man", and also married his beautiful wife. . . .

5. *Atswaqwa*, the rainbow

The god of the rainbow is very vindictive; he soars high in the clouds and punishes, either by death or the infliction of disease, all

[1] A peculiarity of the Abkhasian: the surname precedes the Christian name.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

who transgress against him. In order to avoid incurring the anger of this god, an Abkhaz will not draw water or wash himself when the rainbow is in the sky, and is generally careful about the use of water. Like any other god, *Àtswaqwa* may bestow the "warmth of his eyes and his heart", in return for offerings and prayers. Whoever is affected by his wrath, grows icteritious, emaciated, to save his life he must, at the direction of the sorceresses, make the following offering to the rainbow god :—

On one of the Thursdays [1] the old ("pure") women take the sick person to the river, pass (Geo. *shemoavleben*) around his head 4–5 yards of variegated chintz, and pray : "The great god ! Acknowledging his transgressions this sick person (the name is mentioned) has appeared before thee, and humbly entreats thee to accept this chintz as a pledge that he will perform the established offering at the proper time, at the direction of the sorceresses !"

On the following Thursday he is taken again to the same river and place. Usually three women say the prayer, but there may be seven. Men, with the exception of the patient, are not allowed to be present at this ceremony. The sick person is dressed entirely in white. The eldest woman [2] kills a capon and a hen ; women carry out all the duties, preparing *ashwamkyàt'*, "*ghomi*" (millet pudding), *akwakwàr*, and *atcha-gvazàl* (Geo. *ghvezeli*, an oblong bread), of each of which there must be seven of the usual, and seven of the very small size. All these are placed on *ashwamkyàt'*, on which also burn seven wax candles. The prayer is said by the eldest woman. The patient kneels in front of the offering ; he is taken home immediately the ceremony is over, and he must not look back. The seven small *akwakwàr*, *atcha-gvazàl*, and seven small portions of *ghomi* (*abòst'a*—millet porridge), are thrown into the water ; they represent the share of the female slaves (*aħt'əp'ħwòs*) of the rainbow god. Everything else is consumed by the women themselves ; the remains being thrown into the river, for nothing must be taken home.

Muhammadans must also burn candles at this offering. The candles are fixed on a kind of hoop made of grape vine. At the end of the ceremony the hoop with the burning candles is thrown into the river.

It should be noted that in some parts of the country this god is called *Àtswaqwa-òlia* (the Rainbow-Eliah). So at least he was called, according to the testimony of D. I. Gulia, by Javaz, the famous woman supplicant.

[1] Thursday in Megrelian is *tsashkha*, the day of the sky. It is noteworthy that the Abkhasians perform usually on the day of the sky, the majority of rites that are seemingly connected with the sky, as in the case given.

[2] The Abkhasian women kill animals only on occasions of certain offerings.

/39 cont./

782 among the articles so laid out, with a "chikila" (a kind of
755 veil) on his head, and begs, "Adgil-ankhu, Atula-ankhuse, grant him your favor! Give him firmess of head, heart, and body! Give him color, skin, and bone! Give him back the will to speak and to work! Give him strength! Deliver him from evil," etc. In the same way she also prays to Adabna. After this, she removes the chikila from the sick person with a nut-twig, raises him, strikes him on the back with a whip, and says, "Go, from this day I grant you freedom (azati)," and then both go home. At home a loaf of millet-bread is broken in two; two women each take a half and stand on the two sides of the hearth opposite each other; the sick person passes three times between them under the loaf, while one of the women exclaims, "Give me the one who has assumed the Hebrew belief," and the other, "Give me the convert to Christianity."

753 The Abkhaz is convinced that the invisible being that
755 settled in the sick man hastens immediately upon leaving him to enter someone else, and so, to help him find a new victim, they pray to him at the crossroads, where there is a continuous /40/ traffic of people, and, subsequently, a victim is always found it is unnecessary to search very long. And since an illness can be caught from a spot where a person accidentally fell or sat down, the rite of appeasing the
●[823] earth must be performed on the very same spot of the falling or sitting from which the sickness originated; the doll must be buried on exactly the same spot. This is why, in order not to catch something evil from the spot where he sat down,
[789] the Abkhaz spits three times on getting up and says, "Here stood the house and courtyard of my grandfather!"

2.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Water

782 When someone is ill for a long time with a fever, a
755 female fortune-teller is asked for advice and help; she usually
791

/41 cont./

515 782 823 [983] Fearing to defile it, the Abkhaz avoids bathing in running water; if he bathes, upon coming out /42/ of the water he takes three stones and says, "I sinned against you today; I went into the water and bathed, but you, forgive me." With this prayer, he passes the pebbles around his head with his hands and throws them into the water.

3.

The Ceremony in Honor of the Rainbow

753 [755] [982] The ceremony in honor of the rainbow, which is not obligatory for all, is performed for the greater part on persons whose sickness, according to the female fortune-teller, is caused by the rainbow. A prolonged yellowness of the face, a weakening of the organism, instability of character -- the [821] Abkhaz attributes all these to the fact that the sick person entered water at the very moment when the rainbow was drinking from it.

755 782 "Sinless" old women, having planned a sacrifice and promised a prayer, lead the sick person out to a brook; they take with them two fried capons, two stuffed loaves of unleavened bread in the shape of a tongue, and other provisions, as in the performance of the ceremony in honor of the water. On both sides of the brook, clean objects are laid out, such as clothes, silver, etc., a little bridge made of thread is thrown over the river from one bank to another. Having prepared all this, the praying-woman, with a doll that has been prepared beforehand in her hands, walks around the sick person, who is kneeling down covered with a piece of calico, and prays for him to the rainbow, known by the name Eliaphshi; then she takes a candle and addresses a similar prayer to the "Mistress Mother of the Water," and her "lord husband." After praying over the provisions she takes some [789] of each dish and throws it into the water; she places the doll in a pumpkin, and, after adorning the latter with lighted

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family,
796 539 [567] being angry with her masters, took a portion of the dough for *akwakwàr* destined for the " god " *Got'anùa*, and placing it in a scoop of bitter-gourd (*akwapey*, Geo. *kopa*), hid it in the loft. As usual the family went to bed after the ceremony. But unfortunately for them the offended *Got'anùa* soundly thrashed all of them, using for the purpose the very same scoop in which had been hidden the dough destined for himself. This *gvari* makes propitiatory offerings at the will of sorcerers to *Got'anùa* twice a year, during the night before Christmas and before the Assumption.

Got'anùa, under the name of *Okhvàmuri*, evidently spread throughout Megrelia during the missionaryship of Lamberti.[1]

V. Deities whose Cults have no Fixed Dates

1. *Et-nòkha—Àga-nòkha*

796 [802] [787] The sea, like other manifestations of nature, has its own " part of deity ", called *Àga-inkhwò* or *àga-intswakhwò*. An Abkhaz makes an offering to this deity when he goes to the sea coast for any considerable time. The sea deity is not to be trifled with ; if it is slighted it becomes turbulent, it surges, and punishes the unrespectful. Therefore even the children are forbidden to throw pebbles, or to spit into the sea. The worship of this deity has been preserved in its purest form among the Bzib Abkhasians, namely among the peasantry of the Gudout (Gudaut) district, of the *gvari* of Amp'aràa. It has been described by A. Tch(ukbar), in *Sotrùdnik Zakavkazskoy Missii* (" The Collabarator of the Transcaucasian Mission "), 1912, p. 373 sqq., where the deity *Et-nòkh-Àga-nòkha* is called *Et-nykh Ag-Nykh*. *Àga* denotes sea, *(a)nòkh*—" icon." But what does the word *Et* denote ?[2]

2. *Àshkha-intswakhwò* (god of mountains)

[803] Mountains also have " their part of God " known under the name of *Àshkha-intswakhwò*. *Àshkha* denotes mountain ; *intswakhwò*, " his (of the male rational being) part of God." I have pointed out above that the Abkhaz often uses the word *nòkha* in the sense of god, which in the Christian faith is understood, or more correctly, translated, as icon. The god of mountains " governs " all the mountains and the beasts inhabiting them. Abkhaz shepherds make offerings to this [233] god twice a year, in the spring when they drive the cattle to the mountains, and in the autumn when they drive them back. To him [805] are subject also mountain game. In order to preserve the game from

[1] A. Lamberti, op. cit., pp. 148-9.

[2] This word manifests a consonance with the Assyro-Babylonian name of the god of the sea, *Ea*. Is this a mere coincidence ?

/15 cont./

462 morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush
[281] serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make
[513] beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters
[912] kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In
437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter;
money is not used in these cases.

433 The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture,
[031] cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the
[541] foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more
beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat.
A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main
and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely
supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and
vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in
[556] their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is
what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The
Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow
manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle.
This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it
[262] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and
milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more
than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave
out in one place, would move to another place where grass was
easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it
[178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the
[243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export
of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple.
In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the
phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-
twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the
cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches
are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This
[824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass
(Agrostis vulgaris).

/42 cont./

[755] [782] [789] candles, she lets it float down the stream, saying, "Amuse yourself with this one, instead of the sick person." Finally the old praying-woman passes her hand over the sick person's back, raises him, and having given him liberty ("azati") from his ailment, she sends him home, instructing him not to look around on his way back. The food brought to the stream is eaten on the spot by the participants in the ceremony; the remains from the table are thrown into the water and the dishes washed clean.

This prayer-ritual is considered the most sacred of all in Abkhazia, and the name of the rainbow, Atsaqva, is pronounced with great reverence. The Abkhaz claims that as [821] a consequence of this ceremony in the rainbow's honor the rain appears.

4.

/43/

[782] The Prayer-Ceremony in Honor of the Wind (Phsharnha)

A large loaf of bread with cheese is prepared, placed in a basket, and carried some distance from the house. Here [776] [821] [777] a prayer is said to "Lady Wind" (a deity of female sex), in which she is asked to bring good and to carry off evil and to deliver them from all sorts of misfortunes, etc. Then the middle part of the loaf is cut out, carried into the forest, and hung on an oak tree near the top. The next day, the one who first comes near the oak tree feasts on this offering.

5.

A Prayer in Honor of a Tree

[782] [804] On Assumption Day, vitushki are baked according to the number of men in the family; then the master of the house, with his household, approaches any kind of young tree and, putting his foot on it, prays, "Tree, give me your blessing and happiness ... that I may safely come down

/43 cont./

782 824 from the treetop. May the fresh twig, when I step on it with my foot, first grow stronger and then, being strengthened, grow fresh (soft), etc."

6.

782 755 A Prayer in Honor of Adnqa or (the same thing) "the Outer Ones"

[775] [753] The souls of the dead, the "outer ones," are often the cause of sickness in man and his cattle. They often become angry, and the outward signs of such anger are frequent yawning, sleepiness, and general exhaustion visited upon the culprit. If the one afflicted does not satisfy the angered "outer ones" with offerings and prayers, an inevitable death awaits him. On one of the Saturdays a meal is prepared of young rams' meat, chicken, sour milk, and the meat of a cow, if the soul of a woman is angered, and all these provisions are laid out on a tablecloth under the eaves, on both sides of which are placed a dress and valuable /44/ objects.

The sick man or woman is placed in the middle of a circle and either a man or a woman, according to the sex of the sick person, prays and begs the living and the dead (Angi-phsngis) to have mercy upon the sick and to grant him health and to accept the food prepared for them. The person pronouncing the prayer for the sick one then passes his hand over the back of the sick person and gives him freedom from his sickness ("azati"). If the ailment is thought to be caused by the soul of a prince or of some other personage of [825] high rank, a tethered horse is untied and released in a field at the concluding words of the prayer: "This (horse) is for your soul." According to Abkhaz belief, such a horse soon swells up and dies.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

Àyt'ar ! " etc. The dough is kneaded from the same leaven, only when 796
calling to the cows they exclaim *wootsw*. Shrove Saturday is dedicated to *zhwabràn*.

3. *Anə̀kha-nə̀ħwa* (*Dopu-nə̀kha*)

Near Adzvibzha is a little village called Dopukət, where dwell 776
the Dopua-s who are attendants (Geo. *me-khat-ur-i*) of the " icon "—*Dopu-nə̀kha*, revered by all the Adzvibzhaans and Dopukətans. This " icon " is known also as *shwəjə̀n-nə̀kha*, i.e. Sujuna icon, under which is meant, no doubt, St. George of Sujuna in Megrelia. This " icon " is called *zhwaràk'yə* by the wives of the Dpua-s, for the reason that the wives of Abkhasians have no right to call by name the eldest [602]
members of their husband's *gvari*, or his relations. D. I. Gulia thinks that the word *zhwarak'yə* is the same as the Georgian *zvaraki*, meaning sacrificial animal (the ancient Georgian *zuaraki* = *zowaraki*, Armenian *zowarak*).[1] In honour of this " icon " every Adzvibzhaan and Dopukətan 796
family bakes, on the Shrove Sunday, a cake from millet flour (*sorghum*, in Geo. *ghomi*), which is offered as a gift to it. Prayers are said by the head of each family, and a handful of salt and a piece of wax candle are put aside for the " icon ". The eldest of the Dopua goes round the houses and collects the salt and wax.

Mamsər Dopua told us: " At the present time our icon is in the village Sujuna."

4. *Àyt'ar-nə̀ħwa* (*khwazhwə̀-kərà*, in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərà*)

On the first Monday[2] of the Great Fast the ritual of supplication to Àyt'ar himself is observed. This supplication is otherwise called *khwazhwə̀-kərà* (in the Bzyb dialect *khwazhw-kərà*). *À-khwazhwə̀* [262]
(Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) is a special cake, sometimes coniform, and sometimes of round flattened shape. These cakes, which may be stuffed [782]
with cheese or not, but on this occasion are lenten, are invariably included in sacrificial offerings of the Abkhasians. They may be boiled, as on this occasion, or baked. *A-kərà* denotes " to hold ". After it is [805]
called, in Abkhasian, the month of February, *khwazhwəkə̀n-mzà* (*a-mza*, month, moon). *À-khwazhwə* (Bzyb. *à-khwazhw*) denotes also rhodo- [824]
dendron, the leaves of which are indispensable in the making of [782]
sacrificial maize-cakes.

[1] As a cult term this word is met with in the form زجرخ in Sabaean (Chwolsohn, *Die Ssabier*, ii, 24, 37, cf. p. 191, n. 179), see N. Marr, *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhasians and Alans*, etc. (in Russian), in *Zapiski* (Bulletin) of the Eastern Branch of the Imperial Russian Archæological Society, St. Pb., 1906, vol. xvi, p. 203. (Ed. *Khrist. Vost.*)

[2] The Megrelians call this Monday *t'ut'ashkha bednieri*, lucky, or happy Monday, lit. the moon-day. With the Abkhasians, too, *Ayt'ar's* day is Monday; they pray to the moon exclusively on Mondays. [821]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzhq

8. *Thursday of Easter Week*

(*dsatchɔ̀khur, mardyàni t'argyalàz*)

796 On the Thursday of Easter week the Abkhasians offer a sacrifice [796] to *dsatchɔ̀khur, mardyàni t'argyalàz*. I do not know what the first word denotes. *Mardyàni* is the Megrelian *mardiani* (Geo. *madliani*) and denotes "beneficent", "blessed", "abundant"; while *t'argyalàz* is derived from the Georgian word *mt'avar-angelozi*, archangel; it is not clear, however, which of the archangels is meant. According to the explanation of the Commission, this "icon" punishes the offending family by causing the death, in particular, of children. "If there are children in the family, it does not touch the adults," commented the Commission. Sacrifice to this "icon" is always offered by an oak tree. On the Thursday, early in the morning, sacrificial cakes are baked, and the whole family repair to their oak, which is usually situated nearby within the enclosure. Everybody kneels, [782] facing eastward, and the head of the family makes a bloodless offering consisting of *akwakwàr* and cakes, and entreats the great Dsatchkhur, the beneficent T'argialaz, to forgive them their trespasses, voluntary or involuntary. *Àdmen* say the whole family. The oak tree is decorated [824] with pieces of many coloured stuffs, some fastened with nails and [778] some with wax. This oak is sacred and to fell, damage, or defile it is strictly forbidden.

On the same day, in the evening, but this time at home, the family [780] make a blood offering to *T'argyalàz*. A fattened capon is immolated and cakes are again baked. Some families keep pitchers with "sacrificial wine" in his honour.

"In ancient times when people were not so depraved, T'argialaz [789] procured for the day of offering a wild he-goat as his victim," Osman Kamkia informed me, "just as the Ilori 'icon' procured an ox. Now he no longer does so, for we are not worthy of his favours!" concluded the old man, sighing. The peasants Kamkia are *me-khat-ur-n-i* (Geo.), i.e. "attendants of the 'icon'." They keep a little cottage (*p'atskha*) [778] where the "god" is supposed to dwell invisibly. A money-box is kept in the cottage, into which the faithful drop copper coins used exclusively for the purchase of sacrificial offerings.

An old Megrelian, whose name has unfortunately become effaced in my note-book, told me the following:—

778 "The all-powerful and miraculous icon, Dsatchkhur, was removed 789 by the Svans from the Salkhino church, and taken to Svanet'i, where it remained for a long time; in the end, however, moved by pity for the Megrelians, the icon returned of its own accord and alighted on an oak which stands on the picturesque hill of Salkhino. Near this

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Aàzvibzha

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àhwsa-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nəhwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nəhwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nəhwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nəhwa* (*anəhwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-ɟ*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateyna, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdzVibzha

4. *Abna-intswakhwə* (god of the woods)

The woods also have their "part of deity", *Abna-intswakhwə*. *Abna* denotes wood, forest; *intswakhwə* we already know. When an Abkhaz enters a forest, or if he has to pass a night there, he prays to this deity for protection. I have, however, failed to collect more information about this god of the woods.

Abna-wowyə

In ancient times the forests of Abkhasia were inhabited by *Abna-wowyə*, "forest-people." *Abna* denotes forest, and *a-wowyə*, man. They were strong and courageous, but very ugly in appearance. Their bodies were covered with bristle-like hair. From their breasts projected a strange object, shaped like an axe and strong as steel, which served as a weapon; and by pressing an enemy to their breasts they could cut him into two. They preyed incessantly upon the people, who, however, in the long run, and with God's help, destroyed them. The last of them dwelt in an impassable forest, called Urak', near the village of Adzvibzha. In the same forest there lived also the courageous Khukhw Dchit'anàà, with his herd. Between Khukhw and this "forest-man" there was intense animosity. The ugly "forest-man" would come to Khukhw's hut every midnight, and inquire: "Dchit'anàà Khukhw,[1] art thou at home?" "Yes, I am. If thou art not an old woman come and fight me," responded the fearless Abkhaz. The "forest-man", however, would never agree to a single combat. Khukhw, tired at last of these childish pranks, resorted to a ruse. Placing a log in his bed, he went outside and hid behind a bush not far from the hut. At midnight the "forest-man" came as usual, and receiving no reply, he concluded that Khukhw was soundly asleep. Entering the hut and seeing, as he thought, the sleeping form of his enemy, he was about to aim a blow at the log, when the Abkhaz, who had crept in unawares, fired a shot at him. The "forest-man", although mortally wounded, managed to crawl away, and on the following morning Khukhw followed up the blood-stained footprints, and finding the dead body of his enemy, buried him with due honours. Khukhw appropriated the wealth of the last "forest-man", and also married his beautiful wife. . . .

5. *Atswaqwa*, the rainbow

The god of the rainbow is very vindictive; he soars high in the clouds and punishes, either by death or the infliction of disease, all

[1] A peculiarity of the Abkhasian: the surname precedes the Christian name.

/43 cont./

782 824 from the treetop. May the fresh twig, when I step on it with my foot, first grow stronger and then, being strengthened, grow fresh (soft), etc."

6.

782 755 A Prayer in Honor of Adnqa or (the same thing) "the Outer Ones"

[775] [753] The souls of the dead, the "outer ones," are often the cause of sickness in man and his cattle. They often become angry, and the outward signs of such anger are frequent yawning, sleepiness, and general exhaustion visited upon the culprit. If the one afflicted does not satisfy the angered "outer ones" with offerings and prayers, an inevitable death awaits him. On one of the Saturdays a meal is prepared of young rams' meat, chicken, sour milk, and the meat of a cow, if the soul of a woman is angered, and all these provisions are laid out on a tablecloth under the eaves, on both sides of which are placed a dress and valuable /44/ objects.

The sick man or woman is placed in the middle of a circle and either a man or a woman, according to the sex of the sick person, prays and begs the living and the dead (Angi-phsngis) to have mercy upon the sick and to grant him health and to accept the food prepared for them. The person pronouncing the prayer for the sick one then passes his hand over the back of the sick person and gives him freedom from his sickness ("azati"). If the ailment is thought to be caused by the soul of a prince or of some other personage of [825] high rank, a tethered horse is untied and released in a field at the concluding words of the prayer: "This (horse) is for your soul." According to Abkhaz belief, such a horse soon swells up and dies.

/58 cont./

731 789 donkey is brought, which they cover with a white sheet and put the doll on it. One of the girls takes the donkey by the rein, while two others support the doll, and they set out for the place where the raft was made. The other girls accompany the procession on both sides, singing "dziva dziva [639] dzvari! Kva kva mykryld aphsh-akh ipha did shivait dzy khychik, dzy khuchik," which means, "To get water, water! To get rainwater; a red daisy! Son of the Lord, we thirst for a little water, a little water!" When they come to the river, they take the doll from the donkey, put it on the raft, and, setting the straw afire, let it float downstream; they then try to chase the donkey into the water, which, of course, requires no small effort. At last the donkey is dragged into the river, and, emerging on the opposite bank, he begins ● [825] to bray, which is considered the surest sign of forthcoming rain. If, however, the donkey fails to bray, the same ceremony is repeated anew on the following day or the next day after that.

25.

Saints

776 778 [184] Independent of the general worship of all the deities discussed above, the inhabitants of the villages of Lykhny, Lzaa, and Ilori are under the protection of saints, to whom the churches erected in those villages are dedicated; or, more correctly, who are under the protection of the churches themselves. In Lykhny each family invokes the protection of Anan-Lykhnykh (the Virgin Mother of Lykhny), in Lzaa, of Anan-Lzaanykh (the Virgin Mother of Lzaa, i.e., the cathedral of Pitsunda dedicated to the Holy Virgin), in Ilori, of Tsminda Giorgi (the cathedral of St. George). To invoke 782 their protection, sacrifices must be offered, which are, in [796] fact, brought by each family once a year on a Sunday evening.

[231] - On the day set aside for the offering, the best year-old

[767 cont.]

776 good and bad. The Hammerers (Ašatsatšap'atsa) decide the fate of the newborn and write it on their foreheads (lakhintsara). As nature gods they worship the protector of cattle (Aĭt'ar), of goats (Džabran), of wild game (Ažvepša), of the earth (Adabna), of the rainbow (Atsakwa), and the protectress of the water (Dzlan dzahwas'), of the wind (P'šarn'a), of seeds (Dž'adž'a and Anap'anga), of dogs (Ališakantra), of bees (Ananagund), and others. Just like the Osset, they have a protector of raiders (Eirig-ātsnykh) or Tšugurukhnykh) and one of smiths (Šyošu). The latter two, which are called upon very frequently, may be of a manistic type, derived from the belief in souls, as may be the protective spirit of the hearth (Aša'ara), the mother-goddess (Anana'a), and the "outer ones" (adnqa) (see p. 22). The Abkhaz attribute to the god of thunder (cf. p. 87) the same power and abilities as the Osset do to the holy Elias, but he is in part confused with the incomprehensible highest god (see p. 61) and is endowed with his abilities, and therefore also the shape of the local supreme god (Anybs-nykha-dudrüp'š), whose home is supposed to be the mountain Dudrüpsh at Lykhny. ---Hunters sacrifice a male goat or a ram to the god of game (Ažvepša) before the hunt, which begins after the vintage [768] and lasts until about the new year, so that he will grant them the desired prey from his herds. He gives them, however, only those animals that he and his daughter have already eaten and that he has restored to life by wrapping their bones in the skin after his meal. White animals are the herdsmen of Ažvepša and therefore must not be slain.

224 [783] [825]

Evil souls, similar to the western European vampires, tear the eyes, heart, liver, etc. out of the body and suck the milk from the cows. They have different powers and accordingly ride on frogs, mice, cats, or on foxes and wolves. Their chief (Roskipi) lives on the mountain Tabakona, where every year they must account for Mary's Assumption and must exhibit the plundered body-parts. For this reason the Abkhaz put up crosses during fasts, carry lights on their heads, and on the previous night stay up and shoot and sing. The evil souls can at the same time stay among men and on the mountain Tabakona, since

776 [788]

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
AdZVibZha

796 *à-khwazhw* and entreats god *Alòshkintr* to grant the house faithful dogs—those best friends of man and reliable watchers of his weal; the prayer at the same time spills some of the hot *a-k'warəpà* or *a-*
[262] *k'warpà* (a thick broth of *à-khwazhw*, or millet) towards the sea and some towards the mountains, uttering "*Wootsw!* Burn out the tongue
[254] of the evil-speaker, the eyes of the evil-eyed", and continues his prayer.
[776] In the opinion of the commission, *Alòshkintr* is also "part" of *Àyt'ar*. *Ala* denotes dog; *shkintr*, however, is incomprehensible.

The commission explained that "dog" was mentioned before
[231] "man" on account of the former being more capable of loyalty to a master than the latter.

671 It should be noted that the common law values the blood of a
685 dog in proportion to that of its owner; the blood of a baron's dog is
825 equal to that of a baron, of a peasant's to that of a peasant, etc.

539 From the lips of K. Dolbaia (Abkh. Delba), an 80-year-old Abkha-
231 sian, who possesses an expert knowledge of the Abkhasian language, I wrote down the following tale:—

"In ancient times, when Abkhasia was inhabited by giants and devas (daevas), Aslan, one of the giants, would not leave the devas in peace. Once, when he was asleep, the devas crept up stealthily, bound him with silk laces, blinded and killed him, and threw him into a pit as deep as a well. On their return from their usual hunting expedition, his dogs discovered their master, but they could not pull him out of the well. They fell upon an ox-cart driver who happened to be passing by, and compelled him to rescue their master from the well and unbind him. The dogs licked Aslan for three days and three nights, and so brought him back to life and restored his sight."[1]

The following superstition prevails among the Abkhasians. If
[821] someone, noticing the heavens bursting open, succeeds in uttering *Làri*, *vàri*, *khəzò*, *jkhwàri*, he will have all his wishes fulfilled. Only one woman was honoured with this great good fortune, the widow of a Mukvabba. *Làri* is interpreted as *lala* which denotes dog; *vàri*
[192] (*wàri* from *aowyò*,* man) as man; *khəzò* as whey; *jkhwàri* as the crust of millet porridge; uttered together they are supposed to mean "make me rich". My Abkhasian advisers repeatedly emphasized that the dog was mentioned first because of its unexampled loyalty and fidelity to man, his master.

776 (*d*) *Àmza-nəhwa*, Prayer to the Moon.
796 The supplicant takes the moon-shaped cake and says: "Thou,

[104] * See p. 122, note *. According to Marr, the throat participates vigorously in the production of this composite or diffusive sound, and in a way as if the sound of the guttural "ʒ" (the ancient Arabic *'ain*) were also heard. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[171] [1] The Academician N. Y. Marr has kindly directed my attention to Moses of Khoren, who describes how by order of Semiramis, the dogs of *Aralòs* (cf. *Alòshkintr*) licked the corpse of *Aru* or *Araia*, the Armenian Prince, in order to revive him.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Alzvibzha

1. *Adzɨrga-khwasha*

Either during the night before *baioba*, or, according to some members of the Commission, on the Wednesday evening of Passion-week, is observed the rite of binding legs with wool threads. Having supped early, the family retires to bed, each individual thrusting out his or her right leg from under the blanket. The eldest woman in the family stands on a stool in the middle of the room, and spins thread from wool. She does her work in silence. Having spun the required quantity, she quietly approaches the beds, and binds with this thread the right leg of each of their occupants, murmuring: "May God grant thee to see such days for a hundred years!" *Adzɨrga* (more correctly, *adzɨga*) denotes a thick thread; *a-khwasha*—Friday, so that this rite was in former days, probably, observed on Fridays. The threads were afterwards burnt on the fire under the small cauldron in which was boiled the meat of the sacrificial animal, on Easter Day.

2. *K'wab-gharghar**

As soon as the binding ceremony was finished, the woman seized a copper cauldron, or a copper basin, and struck it like a gong, shouting at the top of her voice: "We have beaten! We have beaten!" The whole family then ran out into the garden, shouting *shwakk'waf'weyt*! "We have beaten you (outstripped)!" The "beaten" neighbours, annoyed to find themselves "beaten", immediately fell upon them, and a mock battle ensued. The battle was fought, of course, entirely as a joke, and with great merriment. In ancient times, a whole village often went to "battle" against another, beating copper cauldrons and basins. The "battle" was followed by dances and fun-making continuing till the dawn. *A-k'wab* denotes cauldron of copper, *gharghar*, knock, rap, clatter of a copper cauldron or basin.

3. *Aqaf'wara*

This Abkhasian term denotes the following superstition: an Abkhaz considers it a great misfortune if he hears the warbling or chirping of a swallow or the call of a cuckoo, before he has had his breakfast (or has at any rate partaken of salt); the bird will have "beaten" him, and this he regards as a great misfortune. In order to avoid this he eats salt, or something salt-flavoured immediately on rising from bed, which means that he has won the "contest".[1]

* The labial semi-vowel "w" in "*k'w*", "*f'w*", as also in "*kw*", "*fw*", etc., met with in this article, labialises the preceding consonant sound, the combination "*k'w*", "*fw*", etc., representing labialised varieties of "*k*", "*f*", etc. [TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.]

[1] Georgians also have such a superstition.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

I quote here the following story: "A female slave of a family, being angry with her masters, took a portion of the dough for *akwakwər* destined for the "god" *Got'anùa*, and placing it in a scoop of bitter-gourd (*akwapey*, Geo. *kopè*), hid it in the loft. As usual the family went to bed after the ceremony. But unfortunately for them the offended *Got'anùa* soundly thrashed all of them, using for the purpose the very same scoop in which had been hidden the dough destined for himself. This *gvari* makes propitiatory offerings at the will of sorcerers to *Got'anùa* twice a year, during the night before Christmas and before the Assumption.

Got'anùa, under the name of *Okhvàmuri*, evidently spread throughout Megrelia during the missionaryship of Lamberti.[1]

V. Deities whose Cults have no Fixed Dates

1. *Et-nə̀kha—Àga-nə̀kha*

The sea, like other manifestations of nature, has its own "part of deity", called *Àga-inkhwə̀* or *àga-intswakhwə̀*. An Abkhaz makes an offering to this deity when he goes to the sea coast for any considerable time. The sea deity is not to be trifled with; if it is slighted it becomes turbulent, it surges, and punishes the unrespectful. Therefore even the children are forbidden to throw pebbles, or to spit into the sea. The worship of this deity has been preserved in its purest form among the Bzib Abkhasians, namely among the peasantry of the Gudout (Gudaut) district, of the *gvari* of Amp'aràa. It has been described by A. Tch(ukbar), in *Sotrudnik Zakavkazskoy Missii* ("The Collabarator of the Transcaucasian Mission"), 1912, p. 373 sqq., where the deity *Et-nə̀kh-Àga-nə̀kha* is called *Et-nykh Ag-Nykh*. *Àga* denotes sea, *(a)nə̀kh*—"icon." But what does the word *Et* denote?[2]

2. *Àshkha-intswakhwə̀* (god of mountains)

Mountains also have "their part of God" known under the name of *Àshkha-intswakhwə̀*. *Àshkha* denotes mountain; *intswakhwə̀*, "his (of the male rational being) part of God." I have pointed out above that the Abkhaz often uses the word *nə̀kha* in the sense of god, which in the Christian faith is understood, or more correctly, translated, as icon. The god of mountains "governs" all the mountains and the beasts inhabiting them. Abkhaz shepherds make offerings to this god twice a year, in the spring when they drive the cattle to the mountains, and in the autumn when they drive them back. To him are subject also mountain game. In order to preserve the game from

[1] A. Lamberti, op. cit., pp. 148-9.

[2] This word manifests a consonance with the Assyro-Babylonian name of the god of the sea, *Ea*. Is this a mere coincidence?

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

their enemies, the god ordered the bird *aqaqab* to watch over them; the Megrelians who have the same belief, call this bird *kakabi*.[1] As soon as this bird sights at a distance a hunter or some other enemy, it soars high up into the sky, and by screeching warns the game of the approach of danger. That is why this bird is always found near the beasts.

The god of the mountains demands respect. He punishes severely those bold enough to bathe in clear, transparent mountain streams. The Abkhaz shepherds do not, therefore, bathe in these streams, being afraid of drawing upon themselves the displeasure of the god of the mountains: the nude body is said to defile the waters of the mountain spirit.

3. *Azhwèyp'shad* (gods of beasts and hunting)[2]

Azhwèyp'shad are gods of beasts and of hunting. They dwell in impassable forests, and lead an ordinary family life. To them are subjected all game, and without their will no one can shoot bird or beast. These gods kill for themselves some wild animal, boil and eat its meat; they wrap the bones in its skin and then revive the animal by striking it with a wand. Only after an animal has been resurrected in this way is a hunter granted the right to shoot it, and then only the particular hunter for whom the gods have destined it: no one else, try as much as he will, can kill it. Of this the Abkhasians are aware, and they employ the following characteristic greeting when they encounter a fellow hunter: *zp'sà-aakhàw yùzp'shùr*, "Which is destined to die, that (animal) is waiting for thee!" the answer being, "For both of us is waiting!"

A few words may be said about the way in which Abkhasians divine the success or failure of their hunting on the day of the Assumption. Before starting out the hunter takes a sharp knife and repeatedly strikes the table, cutting nicks in it. Passing his palm over the table, he says: "Whether thou sayest fifteen, whether I say fifteen, whoever says fifteen (it will be) thirty, fifteen." If the nicks thus cut number exactly fifteen it is a good omen; the gods will reward him with game.

The Abkhasians learnt this method in the following manner. A hunter once followed a wild goat, but he could not shoot it. It led him into the thick of a wood, where he saw a huge cauldron, around which sat gods. They invited him to join them. Nearby stood a goat. They killed the latter and invited the hunter to partake of the meal. When the gods began to throw bones into the hide, the hunter concealed one of them, putting in its place a small stick (or a small knife,

[1] The word is consonant with the Georgian *Kakabi*, partridge.
[2] The term is construed as plural.

/19 cont./

844 565 the bed of the expectant mother a cord is suspended from the ceiling, which she can grasp during the severe pains and spasms of childbirth. It is indecent for her to let her moans and screams reach the ears of her parents-in-law; she must staunchly bear her sufferings so as not to lose their respect forever. At last the child is delivered. The birth of a boy brings more joy to the [842] mother than the birth of a girl, as it gives her more respect and honor in the eyes of society, but she is not particularly saddened by the birth of a daughter either, for it still serves as proof of her fertility. The newborn child is left in the care of the wet nurse [608] [853] (the wife of the foster father), and the female relatives congratulate the new mother on the happy /20/ outcome of the delivery. The mother, too, is happy, and most of all, of course, because with the passing of the baby into the care of others she herself will soon recover and, free from caring for it, can more easily preserve her beauty and freshness of face. In a few days her husband returns and in his turn congratulates her on the delivery of her child (1).

1. Cf. the excellent article, "Abkhazia," by K. Machavariani in the newspaper Iveriia, 1884, No. 275.

608 565 On the day set for the departure of the wet nurse with the newborn baby, the parents give a banquet and give her the materials for a dress, for underwear, and for all the appurtenances for the child's cradle, a copper kettle to bathe it in, and other small articles.

From this day on the foster mother receives the honorary title of anadzdzei (nurse, foster mother), and both she and her husband, the abadzdzei (foster father), are held in universal respect; upon its entry into the house of the foster father and mother, the baby is recognized as a ward (akhupha) of the family to which the foster father belongs.

The foster parents cherish the child in due fashion and maintain him in comfort and contentment. After two or three [431] years the child is taken to its parents, along with presents consisting of one or two bulls, a goat, capons, wine, bread, etc.

[770 cont.]

755 might leave. As soon as the afflicted person is able, he himself goes to the water with a prayer-woman; there he kneels and
[782] offers up a hen to the mother of the waters, a rooster to her husband, and a candle to each of them and to her female servant (Abza 'avabzatšav = benefactress, intercessor). The woman prays and strokes the sick person on the back for "deliverance" (azatí).

If someone suffers from jaundice or debility, [771] the "irreproachable" elders lead him to the river, lay his clothing, silver articles, etc. on both banks, and make a bridge of twisted yarn over the river; the prayer-woman then circles the sick person with a doll and prays to the rainbow in the name of the Eliap'ši, to the mother of the waters, and to her husband. She
[784] casts into the water pieces of the food that was brought along: roasted chickens, tongue-shaped flat cakes, etc., and she allows the doll to float downstream in a gourd with a burning candle, while she prays that the goddess amuse herself with it rather than with the sick person. Finally she gives the latter "deliverance," and he may not look back on the way home (cf. p. 924 f. [untranslated]).

231 789 When rinderpest struck, the Kemirkehe used to dig a tunnel in a steep river-bank and in the middle of this a pit in which they fastened a black cat with a silver belt. They covered the pit with boards and earth, ignited a fire on top by rubbing two sticks together, and drove the cattle through the river and the tunnel, to the accompaniment of the priests' litany. Afterwards the cat was freed.

• 842 The above-mentioned threefold prayer at the water is aimed at fertility when one "leads to the water" a young woman for the first time, during which an egg is thrown in, and, in the 844 case of a woman in childbed, food for the infant.

787 The Abkhaz read signs for future events, for a favorable or unfavorable outcome for undertakings, from the stars, from
[831] the form of the moon, from meeting certain animals or human beings, and also, in the manner of the Tatars, from the cracks in a sheep's shoulder-blade that has been cast into the fire (see Vol. II, p. 325).

/18 cont./

III.

Education -- The Educated -- The Educators

565 While the upper class in Abkhazia enjoyed privilege and
566 power, the situation of the lower classes was one of great oppression; /19/ the batoni (master, feudal lord) looked upon his subject, his slave, as a commodity; he could sell or pawn him
[567] according to circumstances. However, even after the abolition
[579] of slavery, the position of the peasantry did not improve, due to the fact that the nobility did not cease from robbery and pillage and plunder until the most recent times.

565 Under such a state of affairs, all the peasantry could do
608 was to resign itself to feudal conditions and try, wherever possible, to get protection. The best method lay in the custom of adoption, or the rearing of the sons of the aristocrats by the peasants. Thanks to this custom, the aristocrats themselves were strengthened, for in this way they gained in the peasants their most faithful supporters, while at the same time freeing their wives from the onerous duty of bringing up and feeding their own children. This is the reason that in all Abkhazia there is not a single peasant who has not reared one or several princes and nobles; as a consequence of this custom, hardly one per cent of the nobles have been nursed at their own mother's breast.

Before the beginning of childbirth in a family of the aristocracy (didebuli), on the one hand relatives and acquaintances and, on the other hand, the future foster-mothers of the expected child, accompanied by their husbands and female relatives in order to be able to bear the newborn foster-child back to their village with due ceremony, begin to gather around the pregnant
●344 woman. During the childbirth, girls from the village also come to
565 visit the expectant mother in order to distract her and to relieve
[533] her sufferings during labor with gay songs and the telling of fables
[538] and fairy tales. The husband is absent during this time. According to the customs of the country, he is not allowed to be present when his wife gives birth and therefore leaves the home. Above

/19 cont./

844 565 the bed of the expectant mother a cord is suspended from the ceiling, which she can grasp during the severe pains and spasms of childbirth. It is indecent for her to let her moans and screams reach the ears of her parents-in-law; she must staunchly bear her sufferings so as not to lose their respect forever. At last the child is delivered. The birth of a boy brings more joy to the [842] mother than the birth of a girl, as it gives her more respect and honor in the eyes of society, but she is not particularly saddened by the birth of a daughter either, for it still serves as proof of her fertility. The newborn child is left in the care of the wet nurse [608] (the wife of the foster father), and the female relatives congratu- [853] late the new mother on the happy /20/ outcome of the delivery. The mother, too, is happy, and most of all, of course, because with the passing of the baby into the care of others she herself will soon recover and, free from caring for it, can more easily preserve her beauty and freshness of face. In a few days her husband returns and in his turn congratulates her on the delivery of her child (1).

1. Cf. the excellent article, "Abkhazia," by K. Machavariani in the newspaper Iveriia, 1884, No. 275.

608 565 On the day set for the departure of the wet nurse with the newborn baby, the parents give a banquet and give her the materials for a dress, for underwear, and for all the appurtenances for the child's cradle, a copper kettle to bathe it in, and other small articles.

From this day on the foster mother receives the honorary title of anadzdzei (nurse, foster mother), and both she and her husband, the abadzdzei (foster father), are held in universal respect; upon its entry into the house of the foster father and mother, the baby is recognized as a ward (akhupha) of the family to which the foster father belongs.

The foster parents cherish the child in due fashion and maintain him in comfort and contentment. After two or three [431] years the child is taken to its parents, along with presents consisting of one or two bulls, a goat, capons, wine, bread, etc.

/41 cont./

755 unnoticed by the occupants of the house of the sick, takes
782 some object belonging to the sick person, e.g., a dress, etc., and goes to the river. Standing on the bank, she says, "Mother of the Water, mistress, if the sick person was bound by you, unbind him"; she then touches the water three times with the object belonging to the sick person and scoops up a few drops of it with alder leaves, which she carefully carries home, where she fastens them to the ceiling above the hearth, convinced that the fever will then disappear like the water in the leaves; then she runs out of the house with the words, "May your sickness also run away like this."

[756] If the sick person feels relief after this, a praying-woman is invited in, a hen and a rooster are prepared with a stuffed loaf of unleavened bread, and three candles are molded, which are distributed in the following manner: the hen and one candle are allotted to the "Mother of the Water," the rooster and the second candle to her husband, and the third candle to their maid-servant, called Abzahav-Abzachav (benefactress). The sick person goes to the water with the praying-woman and kneels down. The praying-woman takes a candle, lights it and places it near the water, and addresses a prayer for the relief of the sick person to the "Mother of the Water" -- dzdzlan dzahvvazh khiphsha gvasha ("Mother of the Water," "mistress of the water," Khiphsha Gvasha); she lights another candle and makes the same request of the "lord husband" of the "Mother of the Water, finally she sets in place the third lighted candle and begs the maid-servant to serve as intercessor and mediator for the afflicted one with her "masters." Then she passes her hand over the sick person's back and gives him "azati" (liberty) from his ailment.

782 585 844 A similar ceremony is performed for the young bride on the occasion when she is for the first time "led out to the water" (i.e., taken to fetch water); it is also performed for a woman in labor so that she may have plentiful milk. In this case, if the ceremony cannot be performed in full, an egg for the "Mother of the Water" is thrown into the water during the prayer.

[770 cont.]

755 might leave. As soon as the afflicted person is able, he himself goes to the water with a prayer-woman; there he kneels and
[782] offers up a hen to the mother of the waters, a rooster to her husband, and a candle to each of them and to her female servant (Abza 'avabzatšav = benefactress, intercessor). The woman prays and strokes the sick person on the back for "deliverance" (azati).

If someone suffers from jaundice or debility, [771] the "irreproachable" elders lead him to the river, lay his clothing, silver articles, etc. on both banks, and make a bridge of twisted yarn over the river; the prayer-woman then circles the sick person with a doll and prays to the rainbow in the name of the Eliap'ši, to the mother of the waters, and to her husband. She
[782] casts into the water pieces of the food that was brought along: roasted chickens, tongue-shaped flat-cakes, etc., and she allows the doll to float downstream in a gourd with a burning candle, while she prays that the goddess amuse herself with it rather than with the sick person. Finally she gives the latter "deliverance," and he may not look back on the way home (cf. p. 924 f. [untranslated]).

231 789 When rinderpest struck, the Kemirkehe used to dig a tunnel in a steep river-bank and in the middle of this a pit in which they fastened a black cat with a silver belt. They covered the pit with boards and earth, ignited a fire on top by rubbing two sticks together, and drove the cattle through the river and the tunnel, to the accompaniment of the priests' litany. Afterwards the cat was freed.

842 The above-mentioned threefold prayer at the water is aimed at fertility when one "leads to the water" a young woman
• 844 for the first time, during which an egg is thrown in, and, in the case of a woman in childbed, food for the infant.

787 [821] The Abkhaz read signs for future events, for a favorable or unfavorable outcome for undertakings, from the stars, from the form of the moon, from meeting certain animals or human beings, and also, in the manner of the Tatars, from the cracks in a sheep's shoulder-blade that has been cast into the fire (see Vol. II, p. 325).

/19 cont./

844 565 the bed of the expectant mother a cord is suspended from the ceiling, which she can grasp during the severe pains and spasms of childbirth. It is indecent for her to let her moans and screams reach the ears of her parents-in-law; she must staunchly bear her sufferings so as not to lose their respect forever. At last the child is delivered. The birth of a boy brings more joy to the [842] mother than the birth of a girl, as it gives her more respect and honor in the eyes of society, but she is not particularly saddened by the birth of a daughter either, for it still serves as proof of her fertility. The newborn child is left in the care of the wet nurse [608] (the wife of the foster father), and the female relatives congratu- ● [853] late the new mother on the happy /20/ outcome of the delivery. The mother, too, is happy, and most of all, of course, because with the passing of the baby into the care of others she herself will soon recover and, free from caring for it, can more easily preserve her beauty and freshness of face. In a few days her husband returns and in his turn congratulates her on the delivery of her child (1).

1. Cf. the excellent article, "Abkhazia," by K. Machavariani in the newspaper Iveriia, 1884, No. 275.

608 565 On the day set for the departure of the wet nurse with the newborn baby, the parents give a banquet and give her the materials for a dress, for underwear, and for all the appurtenances for the child's cradle, a copper kettle to bathe it in, and other small articles.

From this day on the foster mother receives the honorary title of anadzdzei (nurse, foster mother), and both she and her husband, the abadzdzei (foster father), are held in universal respect; upon its entry into the house of the foster father and mother, the baby is recognized as a ward (akhupha) of the family to which the foster father belongs.

The foster parents cherish the child in due fashion and maintain him in comfort and contentment. After two or three [931] years the child is taken to its parents, along with presents consisting of one or two bulls, a goat, capons, wine, bread, etc.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

oak the Megrelians built a church in its honour, in which this icon rests to this day. It has not forgotten the Svans whom it often visits." My Megrelian informant is an inhabitant of Salkhino.

9. *Àħwsa-rəmshap'*

Abkhasians call the first Sunday after Easter Low Sunday, *Àħwsa-rəmshap'*, i.e. Pascha for women. This day is set apart for public games. Early in the morning everybody assembles in the public square where they indulge in all sorts of sport, chiefly, however, horse racing and tournaments. Next day the Abkhasians go back to work, and ordinary life is resumed.

The public games (on holidays) are continued till Whit Monday.

10. *Àdsyla-nəħwa*

In connection with *Àmshap'* mention may be made of two supplications, *Àdsyla-nəħwa* (cf. III (*d*)) and "*Supplication of the Leybaa*". I have not been lucky enough to have witnessed the latter ceremony, which, by the way, belongs to a cult of the Bzib Abkhasians.[1] The worship of the tree, so picturesquely described by ancient writers, such as Strabo, Procopius of Cæsarea, is preserved in a most conspicuous form with its sacred grove, in this supplication of the Leybaa *gvari*, as is also the name of the deity, in that of *Àdsyla-nəħwa*; *Àdsyla* denotes tree, *nəħwa* (*anəħwara*), praying, supplication. The deity of the tree itself is called *Àdsyla-intswakhwə*, wherein the latter part denotes "his (of the male rational being) part of god, deity". The Abkhasians in their religion personify and "intellectualize" all manifestations of life, and they strictly distinguish the gender of each of them.

In order to protect wanton children who roam about without restraint, and love to climb trees, the Abkhasians make offerings to the "spirit of the tree", entreating the "great part of the deity of the tree" to guard their children against falling off trees and hurting themselves. The objects offered are capon and cakes. The oak (*a-j*) they consider as the sacred tree, to which they make the offering; walnut-trees (particularly the hazel-nut-tree) and yoke-elms are "pure" trees. If someone falls from the tree they must dig up some coal from under the spot where the person fell; if no coal is found, the accident is regarded as serious; and the person will not survive the fall. An offering is also made to the "spirit of the tree" in the case of certain illnesses, as directed by sorceresses, the sick person being supposed to have fallen ill through having incurred the wrath of the spirit.

[1] About this see the article by N. Pateypa, in the *Collaborator of the Transcaucasian Mission* (in Russian), 1912, pp. 107–112, 124–7.

/8 cont./

579 nothing will give him away or betray him, neither his dagger, always kept in a sheath, nor the glitter of his rifle, wrapped in a cover, nor the soft, inaudible steps of his feet outfitted in bast shoes, nor his horse, well-trained for night-riding, nor, finally, his tongue, the hissing sounds of which resemble the rustling of leaves... With bloodshot eyes, his dagger in one hand and his pistol in the other, the mountaineer throws himself into the battle with a frightful whoop, and at this moment he forgets everything but victory... Such are the Abkhaz and their neighbors.

Even now the Abkhaz looks upon thieving as an act of boldness, of heroism, /9/ and almost as much of a necessity as food and drink. All the Abkhaz, from the small to the great, suffer equally from this ailment -- men, women, and children, and the Abkhazian upper class have even made it their regular occupation. Times and circumstances change, generation after [198] generation slowly but steadily introduces new cultural principles into Abkhaz life -- and robbery alone remains the favorite occupation, as though hallowed by the authority of a hoary antiquity...

● 867 As a matter of fact, what is surprising about it? While still a child, the Abkhaz is subjected to the irresistible influence of the circumstances surrounding him and of all possible elemental forces. And as he grows up, he acts according to these external elemental influences or internal moral influences. Now, to what forces is the Abkhaz exposed in his youth, and what moral principles does he derive from the phenomena and facts of nature and the milieu around him?... There he is, as a child, holding in his hand a knife with a handle bigger than he is, pasturing buffalo or goats in the forest or in the mountains, and he observes what goes on before his eyes: here a fox, lying in wait for a careless wild chicken, catches its prey and carries it into the depths of the forest to finish it off; there a half-starved wolf snatches a lamb from the herd, under the eyes of the unwary shepherd -- a boy like himself; and there, farther away, a bird of prey, waiting until the right moment, shoots down like an arrow upon one of the weaker forest-dwellers and, sinking its claws into its body, flies up with its prey and disappears into

/9 cont./

867 the blue skies... and so it is, day after day. These very same examples of unpunished robbery and violence, repeated daily, must leave deep traces in the conscience of the observant young shepherd. Upon his return home, phenomena he has observed in nature are consolidated and, as it were, sanctified in his eyes by the authority of the older members of the family: every day there are discussions and squabbles about the loss or stealing of cattle; on the one hand, he hears words of praise and approval applied to stealing, and, on the other hand, curses addressed to the thief; finally he sees how the housewife, the lawfulness of whose behavior he has never once thought of doubting, very cautiously digs up the buried meat of an animal stolen from the neighbors and cooks it... And when the child, grown wise by
867 observing his mileu and by the successful experiences of his
579 relatives, /10/ matures into a grown youth, his parents and the leading members of the family in general provide him with arms, having given him their blessing beforehand with the words: "Now make your own living, make your fortune by thievery and robbery, the same as all the people your age." Hence, thievery here has not only the status of an example worthy to be followed when the proper occasion presents itself; it is presented as an obligatory modus vivendi, as a dogma, sanctioned by the authority of the parents and of the older members of the family in general.

867 Let us turn our attention to still another circumstance. As
579 is well known, children love fairy tales and all kinds of stories
538 and legends. In the long winter nights, the old men and women tell stories to the Abkhaz children. But the majority of such tales are likewise harmful from the point of view of moral influence, for the contents of these legends, fairy tales, and stories go no further than eulogies of stealing, robbery, and raiding; in them are sung the praises of the daring, determination, and bravery of some "abrag" (abrek = bandit), of his resourcefulness as a thief, his keen-wittedness when in difficulties, his audacity in robbing and seizing another man's property. This may provide a partial explanation of the regrettable phenomenon in the life of the Abkhaz, that even persons who have had a modicum of secondary education

/10 cont./

867 579 immediately upon their return home revert to the practice acquired in childhood -- stealing. This is of course not the fault of the school or of secondary education, but of the traditional views on this "trade," contact with which kills every other way of looking at it, as the lone wheat-stalk is smothered among the weeds that surround it.

579 In his stealing, the Abkhaz is treacherous. The best of friends, to all appearances, do not hesitate to steal from each other, and in Abkhazia it is no rare thing for brother to steal from brother, father from son, or son from father. It is almost proverbial that when an Abkhaz has no one to steal from, he robs himself. There have been instances of an Abkhaz stealing a horse from a neighbor on a dark night, taking it miles and miles away and exchanging it for another, riding back home on this fresh horse the same night, and the next morning, the minute his neighbor raised the alarm, rushing over and being the first to offer his sympathy and joining the chorus of people calling down curses on the thief and dashing off with the others in frenzied pursuit.

685 579 692 The Abkhaz thief will not admit his crime, even /11/ when he could be convicted on the evidence of witnesses. When a robbery case is tried at village meetings, a decision of the judge in favor of the accused is not infrequently influenced by the audacity of the latter's pretexts, by his shameless subterfuges, and by his so-called "talking circles around them." In general at such [537] meetings, any exhibition of sly rhetoric, however shameless, on the part of a notorious thief finds not only attentive listeners but even admirers. "He saved himself by the bravery of his speech," they say in such cases.

And though such "eloquence" on the part of the thief often saves the guilty one from punishment, the victim, understandably, does not believe in his innocence and tries to get back at him at the proper moment for his losses, according to the formula of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.

682 At present vengeance for spilled blood is on the wane, but at one time it was one of the most important features of Abkhaz life. The custom of blood-revenge puts the relatives of a person

/13 cont./

574 road in the evening, he immediately greets him, "bziala vahbeit" -- "it is good to see you!" Then he invites the traveler into his house; "Come in and rest, where are you going now? Spend the night in our house, and early in the morning go your way." If the traveler, be he an acquaintance or a stranger, accepts the invitation and puts up at the host's house, he receives a warm reception and is wonderfully well regaled. And if the traveler does not accept the invitation, he replies, "ubeikht" (grow rich, thank you) and continues on his way. The custom of hospitality protects the traveler even from blood-vengeance. Once he is someone's guest, no one has the right to touch him.

181 Along with his hospitality and generosity, the Abkhaz is
● 888 also courteous, polite, and respectful, especially to older persons. Here are a few examples.

515 Before taking any food the Abkhaz usually wash their hands.
576 But the washing is performed in order of seniority, the ablution
[264] of the hands beginning with the oldest and ending with the youngest of those attending the banquet. The same order is observed in drinking wine. But on such occasions the oldest person does not lag behind either. In the beginning he renounces his right of priority and invites the person next in rank to drink wine or to wash his hands first. This is required by the custom of courtesy and politeness. But, of course, the younger person flatly refuses the honor offered him. Finally, after many mutual compliments and words of persuasion, the first one (the oldest) accepts the invitation after all. Then the same ceremony is gone through between the second and the third, the third and the fourth, and so on, down to the youngest person attending. Furthermore, while the oldest persons are washing their hands, the younger ones are obliged to remain standing. Here again there is ceremony, exhortations for them to sit down, but if those who are urged to do so ignore these exhortations and continue to stand, then the older person considers it improper to
576 wash his hands sitting down, and he also stands up. The question of which of two persons shall first cross the threshold and

/17 cont./

342 [585] newly-married couples. The poor sometimes have only one small house.

262 The ordinary daily food of the Abkhaz consists of cheese, corn bread, ghomi, and sour milk. The ghomi is prepared with cheese (aelagzh), or with milk and cheese (achamukhkua). In winter the Abkhaz contents himself with cooked meat; goat's meat is preferred. Doing without wine is no problem to him as long as there is sour milk. The Abkhaz hates crawfish; formerly he also disliked fish, but is now gradually becoming accustomed to eating it; there are also certain vegetables that are not eaten, [263] but the Abhaz likes food that is spiced with bitter herbs and pepper, etc. For occasions of prayer cone-shaped loaves of bread are baked, which are later boiled, in water during Lent and at other times in milk. These loaves are called arvazha.

592 The rights of seniority are strictly observed in the Abkhaz family. All the members of the household obey their pater familias (avn aihab). In the family everything is done according to his orders and wishes; only in matters concerning women does the oldest woman in the family (avn eihab aphs) take command. The younger members always act according to the instructions of the older ones, but if a younger member of the family is cleverer or more experienced than one of superior age, then for all practical purposes things are arranged according to his wishes and instructions.

The oldest (man and woman) in the home perform all re- [888] ligious rites and prayers. The oldest man also performs all [593] family rites. Sons take care of their aged parents with great love; they usually do not leave the parental home as long as the parents are alive. If a separation takes place, the parents are 428 given half of the entire property. In case the property is divided [592] between a mother and her sons, the mother gets, in addition to her dowry, a share equal to that of each of her sons; she then /18/ settles with one of her sons, as she sees fit. The oldest brother is alloted a special share for his seniority (aihabshakhu). If there are many cattle, this special share will consist of one head of each kind of cattle; if there is not much, then only one, the best, is given. The youngest brother also gets a special share